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IMHOTEP

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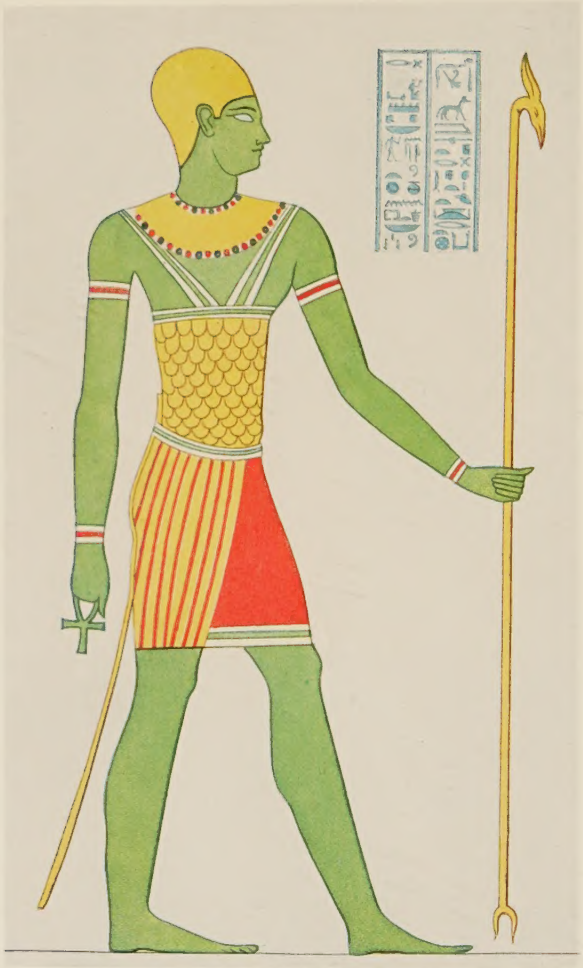

I. IMHOTEP AS DEITY OF MEDICINE

(Cf. page 62)

IMHOTEP

The Vizier and Physician of KING ZOSER

and afterwards

THE EGYPTIAN GOD OF MEDICINE

BY

JAMIESON B. HURRY, M.A., M.D.

Second and Revised Edition

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IN HONOUR

OF

IMHOTEP

The first Figure of a Physician to stand out clearly from the Mists of Antiquity.'—Sir W. Osler.

THE PROLOGUE

THIS Monograph is consecrated to the memory of a distinguished magician-physician and sage who first appears on the stage of Egyptian history in the reign of King Zoser of the IIIrd Dynasty, and reappears at intervals on that stage during a period of over three thousand years. His record therefore extends over a large part of the history of ancient Egypt.

We shall attempt to trace the fortunes of Imhotep both during the period of his human activity as a contemporary of Pharaoh Zoser, and also during the subsequent periods when he was looked upon first as a demigod and finally as one of the full deities of Egypt. We shall also seek to analyse the forces which resulted in such an exceptional occurrence as the deification of an ordinary mortal, i.e. of one who had never been a king.

The story is one which will interest various groups of readers. In the first place it will appeal to the lover of archaeology who is fascinated by the early history of our race and by every detail which throws light on its evolution. There is a glamour

in the study of the earliest pages of civilization, wherever those pages have been written.

There will be a further appeal to the growing number of cultured persons who are thrilled by the story of ancient Egypt as it is gradually being unravelled. The land of the Pharaohs possesses a charm which can scarcely be rivalled by any other country and which steadily grows as its extraordinary history is better understood. Nowhere else do we meet with so ancient a civilization that can be reconstructed with an equal degree of certainty.

Lastly, our narrative makes its strongest appeal to the profession which in every country of the world devotes its life to the relief of suffering and the cure of disease. Of unique interest to that profession must be the life of Imhotep, one of the earliest of known physicians, who made so deep an impression on his fellow-countrymen that his memory endured through many centuries until he was eventually raised to the rank of the Egyptian God of Medicine.

A further object of these pages is to assert the claims of Imhotep to be acknowledged as the patronal deity of medicine—claims which were ac-

knowledged by the Egyptian physicians and which are incomparably older than those possessed by his semi-mythical rival Asklepios. Imhotep appears to be well entitled to this honour on the grounds (*a*) of his unquestioned priority, (*b*) of the eminent services rendered to his country as vizier of Pharaoh Zoser, and (*c*) of his enduring reputation as a healer of disease, a reputation which led eventually to apotheosis.

The Author makes no claim to original discovery. His task has been the more modest but yet useful one of gathering together numerous threads spun by others, of weaving them into a connected canvas, on which he has drawn a portrait as true to life as is possible with the scanty details that have survived. His research is based partly on the writings of leading Egyptologists, British and foreign, partly on the examination of Egyptian antiquities in various museums of this and other countries, and partly also on two visits to Egypt which allowed the collection of first-hand evidence. The memories of happy days spent on the banks of the Nile have rendered this compilation a most enjoyable and interesting task.

In historical studies dealing with such a subject

as Egyptology there is frequently, as in any other branch of knowledge in process of evolution, diversity of opinion even among experts ; further, what appears to be the truth to-day may be modified by fresh discoveries of temples, tombs or papyri to-morrow. The wisest course, therefore, has seemed to him to include references on a liberal scale, so that the reader may be furnished with the authority on which statements are founded.

An abstract of this Monograph was contributed to the Fifth International Congress of the History of Medicine which met at Geneva in 1925. Since, however, the short time allotted to individual contributions forbade the submission of more than a portion of the following study, it has been thought well to publish the work *in extenso*.

This second edition has been carefully revised by the inclusion of much new matter and many fresh illustrations. These additions will, it is hoped, give the reader a more adequate survey of the subject with which the volume deals.

My cordial thanks are due to various authorities who have given facilities in connexion with illustrations.

The Director of the Musée des Antiquités

Égyptiennes at Cairo has kindly permitted the reproduction of Figs. vi and vii. The authorities of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum have given facilities in regard to Fig. viii; those of the Staats-Museum of Berlin in regard to Fig. ix; those of the British Museum in regard to Fig. xiii; the *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, in regard to Fig. iv; the *Illustrated London News* in regard to Fig. ii; Messrs. Methuen & Co. in regard to Fig. xix; the Egyptological Department of the Liverpool University in regard to Fig. xxv. To the late Dr. R. Caton, C.B.E., thanks are due for the loan of blocks used in Figs. iii, v, and xx–xxiii. The source of the other illustrations is given in the text.

Various friends have also given generous assistance in connexion with hieroglyphic readings and otherwise. Amongst them must be mentioned Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, Professor Kurt Sethe, Professor F. Ll. Griffith, Professor T. E. Peet, Miss Murray, Mr. C. J. S. Thompson, Dr. E. T. Withington and Mr. W. R. Dawson. The latter has not only been good enough to read through the proof sheets, but has enriched the volume by many valuable suggestions. I desire also to thank

Dr. Alan H. Gardiner for his kindness in allowing the use of his new fount for the hieroglyphs included in this volume.

The story of Imhotep adds a fresh chapter to the History of Medicine which is gradually being compiled, thanks to the collaboration of workers all the world over.

J. B. H.

'Heathlands,'
12 Grove Road,
Bournemouth,
March, 1928.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

IN the childhood of the world Egypt was the pioneer country as regards the evolution of medicine. To her belongs the high honour of having raised the healing art to a level far exceeding that hitherto attained. Both in diagnosis and in therapeutics astonishing progress was made. Even pathology attracted widespread interest; the Edwin Smith Papyrus suggests that dissection of the human body was systematically practised in ancient times.

The medical schools of Egypt, closely associated with her priestcraft and temples, were famous far and wide, her specialist physicians being summoned to attend royal and other personages in distant lands.[1] For a physician to have been educated in Egypt was in itself a passport to success. This high reputation is acknowledged by Homer when he says : ' In Egypt the men are more skilled in medicine than any of human kind.' [2]

Most of the ancient races of the world have found a place in their theology for one or more deities of medicine to whom were attributed miraculous powers in restoring sick and apparently

[1] Herodotus, ii. 84 ; iii. 1, 129.

[2] *Odyssey*, iv. 227.

dying persons to health. Such deities were worshipped amongst the Persians, Hindus, Chinese, Babylonians, Aztecs and Phoenicians *inter alios*; many of them had shrines to which resorted suffering men and women, whether afflicted mentally or physically.

The ancient Egyptians, like other nations, had numerous deities to whom were attributed the invention of various arts and sciences, including medicine. Amongst those most generally referred to in this connexion are the ibis-headed moon-god Thoth , the reputed inventor of writing and mathematics and the author of religious and scientific works including treatises of medicine, the falcon-headed sun-god Re , the wonder-working Isis with her child the sun-god Horus and Ptah , the ancient God of Memphis. Less important medical members of the Egyptian pantheon were Khnum with rams' horns and the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet , who were worshipped in some districts as the tutelary deities of procreation and childbirth.[1] All these deities, however, were probably mere mythical creations of the imagination and even if some of them had human prototypes they lack the

[1] Various other deities were associated with childbirth; such particularly were the goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Mesekhent and Hekat.

fascination associated with a definite and specific human personality.

Of transcendent interest, therefore, is the famous Imhotep, who first appears on the stage of history as the vizier-physician of King Zoser ( ), a Pharaoh of the IIIrd Dynasty,[1] and who so impressed his fellow-countrymen with his skill in healing disease that he was eventually raised to the status of full deity of medicine. We shall describe his remarkable progress from being a high official at the court of a Pharaoh to his apotheosis as god of medicine.

It will be convenient to divide the career of Imhotep into three periods and to consider in order:

I. Imhotep as Contemporary of King Zoser (*ca.* 2980 B. C.)

II. Imhotep as a Medical Demigod (*ca.* 2850 B. C.–*ca.* 525 B. C.)

III. Imhotep as full Deity of Medicine (*ca.* 525 B. C.–*ca.* A.D. 550)

[1] According to Manetho, King Athothis of the Ist Dynasty practised medicine and wrote anatomical books. No biographical details, however, have survived and the entire story may be legendary.

CHAPTER II

IMHOTEP AS CONTEMPORARY OF KING ZOSER

(*ca.* 2980 B. C.)

IMHOTEP was born in Ankhtowē *ʿnḫ-tꜣwi*, a suburb of Memphis,[1] on the 16th day of Epiphi, the Egyptian name for the third month of Shomu or the harvest season.[2] The exact year of his birth is uncertain, but may be roughly assigned to *ca.* 3000 B. C. since Imhotep was a contemporary of Pharaoh Zoser (Fig. ii) whose reign is usually dated from *ca.* 2980 B. C.[3] Unhappily we know

[1] E. Naville, *Temple of Deir el Bahari*, v, Pl. CXLIX. In Naville's plate there is an error, owing to which the number 16, which should be written $\cap^{111}_{111}$, is written $\int^{11}_{111}$.

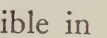
[2] At the time of the institution of the calendar New Year's Day usually corresponded with the rising of Sothis (Sirius) on the first day of the month of Thoth = July 19. The 16th day of Epiphi would be 316 days later, which added to July 19 would bring us to May 31 as Imhotep's birthday.

The question of Egyptian dating, however, is very involved, since the year started on different dates at different periods; moreover it was not until the Persian period that the months received the names by which they are usually known. For an admirable discussion of the problem cf. A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 1927, pp. 203–6.

[3] Although *ca.* 2890 B. C. is usually regarded by Egyptologists as the year of Zoser's reign some recent studies point to a later date, viz. 2776 B. C. For a discussion of the question, which is still *sub judice*, cf. Scharff, 'Grundzüge der Aegyp-

II. KING ZOSER

nothing of his early history, nor is there any record of his appearance in the flesh.

Descended from a distinguished architect named Kanofer *Kꜣ-nfr*, and from a mother named Khreduonkh *Ḫrdw-ʿnḫ*, who probably belonged to the province of Mendes, Imhotep appears to have received a liberal education, so far as such was possible in those far-off days. At any rate he grew up an erudite, versatile man, a sort of Aristotelian genius, who took all knowledge for his province. He became distinguished for his vast learning as well as for some striking achievements. His name Imhotep  signifies ' he who cometh in peace ',[1] a most appropriate name for a healer of the sick and one which must have brought solace and courage to many an anxious patient.

Imhotep devoted his life to various activities which may be considered under the following headings :

A. Vizier. B. Architect.
C. Chief Lector Priest or Ritualist.[2]
D. Sage and Scribe. E. Astronomer.
F. Magician-Physician.

tischen Vorgeschichte ', *Morgenland* (Hinrichs), 1927, Part 12. Should this fresh dating be ultimately established, the chronology of Imhotep's career will be similarly modified.

[1] For the construction and meaning of the name cf. App. B.

[2] This term, proposed by Gunn, is the best translation of the Egyptian word *Kher-ḥeb*.

A. Imhotep as Vizier

The office of vizier to the ruling Pharaoh was one of high dignity and responsibility. The occupant of the post was a sort of Joseph, whose jurisdiction extended over the various departments of state.[1] Although no specific duties of the office under King Zoser [2] are on record, many details of the duties of viziers under later Egyptian Pharaohs are known, and we may fairly conclude that similar duties were carried out by Imhotep.[3]

The following list of titles in itself indicates the multitudinous responsibilities of the office : ' chief judge,' ' overseer of the King's records,' [4] ' bearer

[1] We owe to K. Sethe a valuable monograph, throwing a flood of light on the history of Imhotep and marshalling the evidence that he was a contemporary of King Zoser. K. Sethe, *Imhotep, der Asklepios der Aegypter : Ein vergötterter Mensch aus der Zeit des Königs Ḏośer. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Altertumskunde Aegyptens*, 1902, vol. ii. The author accepts Sethe's evidence as settling the question of such contemporaneity, which is confirmed by recent discoveries. In this volume references to Sethe's *Imhotep* are paged according to the ' Reprint '.

[2] Also known as Tcheser, Zeser, Doser, Tosorthros, Djosirri.

[3] Breasted, in his *Ancient Records of Egypt*, 1906, records many details of the duties of viziers. Cf. especially vol. i, pp. 122, 158, 212 ; vol. ii, pp. 268 ff. A famous vizier of the XVIIIth Dynasty, Rekhmirē, has left a long inscription in his tomb at Thebes detailing the duties of the vizier. Cf. Newberry, *Life of Rekhmara*, pp. 22 ff.

[4] The Palermo Stone proves that official annals were regu-

of the royal seal,' ' chief of all works of the King,' ' supervisor of that which Heaven brings, the Earth creates and the Nile brings,' ' supervisor of everything in this entire land.' Amongst some of the departments of his office are enumerated the Judiciary, the Treasury, War (Army and Navy), the Interior, Agriculture, and the General Executive. A prodigy of efficiency must have been required to carry out such multifarious duties!

The name of the vizier was sometimes actually followed by the royal salutation ' Life, Prosperity, Health ', and in his judicial capacity he was regarded by the people as one who could not do wrong. Three of the greatest sages and authors of proverbial wisdom, Imhotep, Kegemni and Ptah-hotpe, held the office of vizier in the Old Kingdom.

An interesting incident associated with his viziership under King Zoser is recorded in what is known as the Legend of the Seven Years' Famine. This Legend describes a period of terrible starvation caused by the failure of the Nile for seven consecutive years to reach its usual flood level and thus to irrigate the land sufficiently to allow of its

larly kept by the Pharaohs of the O. K. and incidentally reveals a high degree of civilization. Cf. Daressy, *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xii (1916), pp. 161–214; and Read, ibid., pp. 215–22.

cultivation.[1] The result was that grain grew very scarce and almost all supplies of food came to an end.[2] The famine was attributed to the King's neglect to pay due respect and worship to Khnum, the god of the first Cataract, and one of the chief deities controlling the sources of the Nile.

King Zoser, in his distress at the calamity which had befallen his country, turned for help to his trusted vizier Imhotep and questioned him about the birthplace of the Nile and the god who held rule there over it. Unable to answer the King's questions at once, Imhotep requested leave of absence so that he might consult the papyrus rolls

[1] This Legend is inscribed on a granite rock on the island of Sehêl about two miles south of Aswan, and dates from the Ptolemaic period (323–30 B.C.), although in its earlier form it may be as old as the IIIrd Dynasty. As the Legend was advanced by the priests of Isis in Ptolemaic times as supplying legal support for certain claims, the story may at any rate in part be true. The text was first made known by Brugsch, who published it in a brochure entitled 'Die biblischen sieben Jahre d. Hungersnot'. For further details cf. Sethe, *Imhotep*, p. 11; Sir E. A. Budge, *The Legends of the Gods*, pp. lx, 120 (with text and translation).

Another theory is that the Legend was fabricated by the priests of Khnum in Ptolemaic times in order to prove the generosity of the ancient Pharaohs and to enlist a similar generosity from the reigning Pharaoh. Cf. Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilisation*, 1894, p. 240.

[2] A similar seven years' famine in Egypt is recorded in Genesis xli. 54.

in the library of the chief priests. After a brief interval he revealed to the King ' the hidden wonders, the way to which had been shown to no King for unimaginable ages '.[1] On receiving this report, Zoser at once wrote to the Viceroy of Nubia, begging advice and assistance in abating the disastrous effects of the famine. ' My mind recurred ', he wrote, ' to former days, when I had an advocate, to the time of the gods, and of the Ibis-god, and of the chief *Kher-heb* Imhotep, the son of Ptah of his Southern Wall.' [2] He then proceeded to inquire what god or goddess presided over the Nile and could replenish his granaries with grain, so that the deity might be visited and propitiated.

Eventually the King paid a personal visit to the temple of the god Khnum in order to make prayers and supplications before him, and to pro-

[1] G. Steindorff, *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, 1905, p. 101.

[2] Sir E. A. Budge, *Legends of the Gods*, 1912, p. 123. The term Ibis-god here used is an anachronism, and indicates the late date of the Legend, as Imhotep was not designated as ' Ibis ' until after his apotheosis. The title ' son of Ptah ', on various occasions given to Imhotep, is also an anachronism, to be explained by the fact that the existing form of Legend dates from Ptolemaic times, when the god Ptah had been assigned to Imhotep as a divine father. The title of Ptah ' South of his Wall ' is derived from the fact that his temple was situated in the part of Memphis known as the ' South Wall '.

pitiate him with offerings. In response Khnum appeared to the King in a dream, and promised that the Nile should rise and never fail again: 'It shall spread its water out and cover all the land satisfactorily. Plants shall bend beneath their produce. . . . Want shall cease, and the emptiness of the granaries shall come to an end.'

In gratitude for Khnum's timely intervention and aid, King Zoser made a decree and by the advice of his vizier Imhotep presented the god with a strip of land over seventy miles in length on both sides of the Nile, with all its revenues and taxes.[1] He further endowed the temple of the god with valuable gifts, all gold, ivory, ebony, spices, precious stones and woods being tithed so as to supply rich offerings for the temple. This is the prototype of temple endowments, which were doubtless used for the manifold wants of the god, for the celebration of great festivals, for the maintenance of a sacerdotal staff, as well as for building operations.

This story of the great famine throws light on the pleasant relations that evidently existed between the vizier Imhotep and his royal master. Happy indeed was the kingdom in which both

[1] This land extended from Elephantine to Takompso, and was later on called by the Greeks Dodekaschoinos or Twelve Schoeni. K. Sethe, *Untersuchungen z. Geschichte und Altertumskunde Aegyptens*, ii. 3.

sovereign and prime minister co-operated so zealously to rescue the nation in its hour of dire danger. Imhotep appears to have been trusted by his King and, we cannot doubt, beloved by the common people whose welfare was so dear to his heart.

In addition to the office of vizier Imhotep appears, at some time in his life, to have filled the post of local administrator. This may have been the office of nomarch or mayor, an office which Brugsch designates as chief burgomaster (cf. Appendix C).

In January 1926 a statue of King Zoser was found close to the temenos of the Step-Pyramid, which appears to be associated with the vizier Imhotep. On the base of the statue, which unhappily is broken into several pieces, are inscribed a series of titles followed by the name of their owner Imhotep who probably dedicated the statue to the King.

This series of titles, as reconstructed by B. Gunn who has published a valuable article on the statue, is as follows: 'The Chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt, Chief under the King of (Upper Egypt ?), Administrator of the Great Mansion, Hereditary Noble, Heliopolitan High Priest, Imhotep.'[1]

[1] *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte*, xxvi (1926), pp. 177 ff.

It is almost certain that the Imhotep here alluded to is none other than the Vizier to whose memory this volume is dedicated. Indeed it seems incredible that a second Imhotep could have lived in the days of King Zoser of sufficient importance to be allowed to dedicate a statue to his sovereign.[1] We thus obtain what appears to be valuable evidence of the contemporaneity of Imhotep with King Zoser.

B. Imhotep as Architect

Imhotep, 'the chief of all the works of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt,' , was a notable architect, and doubtless owed some of his architectural knowledge to his father Kanofer, a man of some distinction who was known as the 'Architect of S. and N. Egypt'.[2]

In all probability Imhotep designed for his royal master the well-known Step-Pyramid of Sakkarah (Fig. iii) near Memphis, and familiar to every

[1] At first sight no doubt the discrepancy in the titles borne by the two Imhoteps seems inexplicable. The difficulty, however, is not insuperable if we suppose that Imhotep when he inscribed this statue had not yet reached the high stage of official advancement to which in later years he attained. Moreover, we must not lose sight of the great lapse of time between this inscription and the later texts which are the main sources of our information concerning Imhotep.

[2] Cf. Appendix C.

III. THE STEP-PYRAMID OF SAKKARAH

tourist who ascends the Nile.[1] This pyramid, a transition between the mastaba tombs of the earlier kings and the true pyramid form which is met with under the next Dynasty, was constructed by the superimposition of five successively smaller mastabas on an original large one. It never had the continuous casing of stone which marks the true pyramid. The east and west sides of the base measured 396 feet in length, and the north and south sides 352 feet, while the height was about 195 feet. The six gigantic steps measure in height 38, 36, 34½, 32, 31 and 29½ feet respectively, while the width of each step is from 6 to 7 feet. Within the building, which was constructed of blocks of limestone brought from the neighbouring hills, the halls and corridors were lined with blue and green glazed tiles of inlaid faience, bearing the King's names and titles.[2] The several corridors converged in an enormous shaft, at the bottom of which was secreted the hiding-place for the mummy

[1] Full architectural details of this pyramid will be found in H. Vyse's *Pyramids of Gizeh*, 1840–2, iii, pp. 41–50. The Arab name ' Sakkarah ' is probably a corruption of an older Egyptian word Sokari (Socharis), the name of an early god of the dead at Memphis.

[2] An illustration of one of these halls decorated with tiles is given by Maspero, *Manual of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1914, p. 303. Some of the polychrome tiles may be seen in the British Museum.

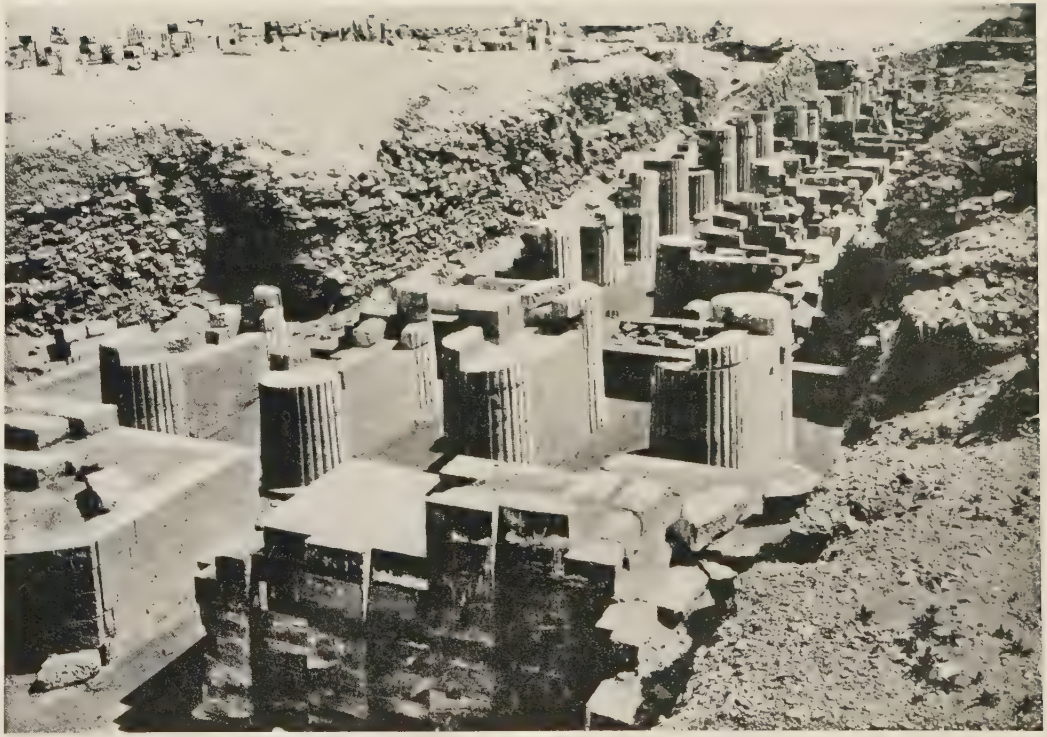
of the deceased Pharaoh with its precious funerary appurtenances. This pyramid is generally said to be the earliest large stone structure known to history, and eventually formed the tomb of King Zoser.[1]

The Step-Pyramid of Sakkarah [2] is an index of a high state of civilization. There must have been wealth in the Pharaonic exchequer, stable government by the vizier and other officials, experience in the organization of labour, aptitude in the keeping of complex accounts, technical skill in the quarrying, dressing, and transportation of stone.

[1] Zoser began by building a mastaba tomb at Bet-Khallâf near Abydos, and subsequently abandoned this scheme in favour of the more ambitious pyramid which was constructed of hewn stone instead of sun-dried bricks which had hitherto been in use. J. Garstang, *Tombs of the Third Egyptian Dynasty at Reqâqnah and Bet Khallâf*, 1904.

Breasted associates the construction of the Step-Pyramid with the use of copper tools, which the recent introduction of metal had made possible. *Conquest of Civilisation*, 1926, p. 60.

[2] The conception of the terraced pyramid of Sakkarah appears on first thoughts a stroke of genius on the part of King Zoser and his architect Imhotep. There are, however, somewhat similar square monuments in India and Mesopotamia of remote antiquity known as Stupas, Topes, or Dagobas, which may have suggested the idea of the Sakkarah Pyramid. There may well have been occasional communications between Egypt and the East even under the early Dynasties. Cf. W. Simpson, 'The Tower of Babel, and the Birs Nimroud', *Transactions of the S. of Biblical Archaeology*, 1893, ix, p. 307.



IV. THE COLONNADE AT SAKKARAH

In all these indications of economic prosperity we may see in part at least the genius of the vizier Imhotep. Nor can we doubt that the triumphant completion of the first pyramid, possibly the earliest large monument constructed of hewn stone, paved the way for the yet mightier pyramids that were soon to follow.

Recent excavations carried on by the Department of Antiquities at Sakkarah have brought to light some remarkable buildings which were also probably constructed by Imhotep at the time the Step-Pyramid was erected. They consist of a huge temenos wall 500 yards long by 300 yards wide, enclosing the Step-Pyramid, together with a beautiful colonnade about 85 yards long, which appears to have formed the main entrance to the pyramid enclosure (Fig. iv).[1] Forty-eight columns of white limestone are arranged in pairs, the shafts being carved so as to imitate a bundle of reeds ; there are also foliage and papyrus capitals. The wall, once perhaps twenty-three feet high, is built in a pattern of panelled bays, in imitation of a mud-brick fortress of the archaic period.

The Sakkarah buildings also supply a good illus-

[1] For further particulars, together with an illustration and a plan of the colonnade, cf. C. M. Firth, *Annales du Service des Antiquités*, xxvi (1926), pp. 97 ff., Pls. II, III. Fig. iv is based on Pl. II in C. M. Firth's article.

tration of a phenomenon characteristic of Egyptian art, in which objects usually made of one material are imitated in another material. Thus wood is imitated in stone, upright posts in light partition walls and transverse beams in imitation doors being represented in the latter material.[1] A surprising detail is the convention used in the treatment of the doors themselves. Wherever there is a gateway leading into a small chamber a door is constructed of solid stonework, so as to imitate wood, although there was no intention to move the door. The imitation work therefore merely served an architectonic purpose. The doors vary in position, some being set wide open, while others only open sufficiently to allow of passage. These remarkable buildings evidently represent the advanced developments of an architectural style which had much humbler beginnings, and will go far to revolutionize our knowledge of Egyptian architecture.

The latest discoveries have revealed that the Step-Pyramid was covered with a coating of fine limestone arranged in step form, and that the step-like structure now visible is only a rough core built in this form for constructional purposes. The masonry employed at this Pyramid is indeed so peculiar as to have received the name ' fine white

[1] J. Capart, *Egyptian Art*, tr. by W. R. Dawson, 1924, Ch. ix.

V. THE TEMPLE OF EDFU

Imhotep masonry'. The excavations still in progress seem likely to lead to further important revelations.

The Pyramid of Sakkarah with its associated temples becomes of extraordinary interest when we remember that it is a funeral monument of colossal proportions built to be the future dwelling-place of King Zoser when death had brought his life-work to a close. Technical skill and artistic feeling were harmoniously blended in the effort to provide a home for the immortal part of the King, where it could be nourished and cared for.

The name of Imhotep is also associated with an early temple of Edfu of which no vestige remains, but which was said to have been constructed according to a plan dropped down from heaven to earth near the city of Memphis. 'The master craftsman was Imhotep, the son of Ptah, the great god of Memphis, and father and son united their powers and produced the first temple of Edfu in one of the earliest periods of Egyptian history.'[1] Possibly there may have been a former temple on the same site erected by Imhotep in the days of Zoser.

The present splendid temple (Fig. v) was begun during the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes I, 237 B.C., and finished in 57 B.C. An inscription in

[1] E. A. Budge, *A History of Egypt*, 1902, viii, p. 49.

the temple describes Imhotep ' as the great priest Imhotep the son of Ptah, who speaks or lectures '.[1] Although this edifice is more than 2,000 years old it is in almost perfect preservation, a gem of architecture. This sanctuary illustrates the generous treatment of the Egyptian religion by the Ptolemaic kings who built noble buildings in various parts of the country, several of them, including Edfu, Philae and Deir el-Medineh having associations with Imhotep.

Imhotep appears to have been the second member of a long pedigree of architects, commencing with his father Kanofer (cf. Appendix C), and ending with Khnum-ib-re, who was chief minister of works for the whole country, and architect of Upper and Lower Egypt from the twenty-seventh to the thirtieth year of King Darius I (*ca.* 490 B.C.).

C. Imhotep as Chief Lector Priest or Ritualist

The Egyptian priesthood included two main classes of priests, the higher class being designated prophets *ḥmw-nṯr* or servants of the gods, and the lower class ordinary priests *w'b* .

[1] De Rougé, *Inscriptions et Notices du Temple d'Edfou*, ii, Pl. 89. According to Naville, *Textes relatifs au Mythe d'Horus à Edfou*, 1870, p. 15, this is the only monument which contains the signature of the artist who made its plan.

Some priests were permanent officials of a temple, others served in rotation and enjoyed an interval of three months' leave between two periods of service.[1] The chief lector priest or ritualist belonged to the higher class and was a permanent functionary entrusted with important duties. One of these was to attend the daily cult of the temple, where he sprinkled the god with water, fumigated him with incense, clothed and anointed him, applied cosmetics to his eyes and arrayed him with various ornaments. He also had to recite prayers from the holy books during the temple liturgy, and since according to the Egyptian faith these religious texts possessed magical powers, the common people regarded this priest as a magician.

The chief lector priest also assisted at the ritual of embalmment and recited spells while the manipulations were in progress.[2] Further, he officiated at the ceremonies connected with the presentation of offerings in the mortuary cult, which has been called the ' Liturgy of Funerary Offerings '. The formula which was pronounced over each element in that liturgy was intended to impart to the

[1] A. M. Blackman, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, x, p. 294, gives a valuable account of the Egyptian priesthood.

[2] W. R. Dawson gives many details of these manipulations. Cf. ' Making a Mummy ', *J. of Egyptian Archaeology*, xiii (1927), pp. 40–9.

mummy after restoration of its faculties offerings of food and drink to sustain its renewed physical life. Although the formulae in the liturgy were recited by the chief ritualist, who carried a roll of papyrus in his hands and directed the assistant priests, some of the ceremonies were performed by the *Sem* priest , assisted by several ministrants.

Another series of ceremonies was known as ' The Opening the Mouth ' , the object being to restore to the inert corpse the functions of which it had been deprived by death and embalmment. The mouth was symbolically opened that the mummy might speak, and the eyes touched that they might see. A bull was slaughtered in order to provide food, while other ceremonies were intended to enable clothes, unguents, &c., to be used, in fact to cause the mummy in all respects to resemble a living human body. The end in view was also aimed at by the recitation of appropriate formulas and by touching the mummy case with a wand shaped like the hieroglyph . When these ceremonies had been performed the body was lowered into the grave and the approach closed, a sumptuous funeral feast being held in the antechamber of the tomb. As the mourners ate and drank they were entertained by musicians and dancers, who, accompanied by harps and other musical instru-

ments, sang the praises of the departed, or songs treating of life and death.

Here also the chief lector priest was responsible for the order of ritual,[1] although he had various assistants, especially the *Sem*[2] who in many respects played the principal part.

It will be obvious that the *Kher-ḥeb* as the chief ritualist priest was held in great honour throughout Egypt. In theory, of course, the King was the only priest and, as the incarnation of Horus, performed the whole funerary ritual for the dead person, conceived as Horus's dead father Osiris. In the eyes of the common people, however, the chief ritualist represented the King and wielded mysterious powers that raised him far above the level of ordinary humanity. In fact every dying person based his hopes of everlasting life and happiness on the efficacy of the spells and words of power used during his funeral ritual.

[1] E. A. Budge, *The Book of Opening the Mouth*, p. 11 and *passim*. In both these series of ceremonies the details date mainly from the XVIIIth Dynasty; but most of them were certainly of much earlier origin.

[2] In the ceremony of 'The Opening of the Mouth' at the tomb of Amenemhēt and elsewhere the principal part is played by the *Sem* priest, the role of the ritualist being that of prompter to his companions. Cf. A. H. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, 1915, pp. 57 ff.; Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, i, pp. 283–324.

D. Imhotep as Sage and Scribe

Imhotep enjoyed the reputation of being ' one of the greatest of Egyptian sages ' ;[1] his fame for wisdom made so deep an impression on his countrymen that it endured as a national tradition for many centuries.

As regards his literary activities, he is said to have produced works on medicine and architecture, as well as on more general subjects, and some of his works were extant at the dawn of the Christian era. His proverbs, embodying the philosophy of life which experience had taught, were handed down from generation to generation, and were noted for their grace and poetic diction, their author being described as a ' master of poetry '.

A remarkable song, or rather dirge, known as the ' Song of the Harper ',[2] has survived in which

[1] E. A. Budge, *Short History of Egypt*, p. 91.

[2] A complete copy of the song occurs in the *Papyrus Harris* 500, in the British Museum (No. 10,060 ; 6, 2–7, 3), and a copy was also inscribed on the walls of the Theban Tomb of Pa-aten-em-hab (XVIIIth Dynasty) of which the remaining fragments are now at Leiden. (Leemans, *Monuments*, Pt. III, Pl. xii ; a reproduction is given by Breasted, *History of Egypt*, 1919, p. 208.) A similar song is inscribed on the walls of the Theban tomb of Neferhotpe (No. 50), which dates from the reign of Haremhab. Both have been studied in detail and published by Maspero, *Études Égyptiennes*, i, pp. 172 ff.

the names of Imhotep and Hardedef [1] are linked together and in which these two sages dilate on the uncertainty and brevity of life, and enforce the doctrine that since man is so soon gone and forgotten, he should enjoy his life to the full. Their philosophy is that of those persons who in all ages of the world have said : ' Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' [2] This poem was evidently a great favourite since we have several versions differing in date by several centuries. The oldest version that has survived was inscribed in the tomb of the Theban King Intef [3] near the figure of the harper, and was doubtless sung by a musician during the funeral feast for the entertainment of the guests. The object was to remind them of the brevity of life, even while they were enjoying

[1] Hardedef was a prince of the IVth Dynasty and probably a son of Khufu (Cheops) , the builder of the great pyramid of Gizeh. He also was one of the wise men of Egypt and figures in the famous story of Khufu and the magicians contained in the Westcar Papyrus. [2] 1 Corinthians xv. 32.

[3] There were several Kings Intef in the XIth Dynasty, and it has hitherto been generally supposed that the Intef referred to in this poem was one of them. There was, however, another series of Intef Kings in the XVIIth Dynasty (cf. Winlock, *J. of Egyptian Archaeology*, x (1924), pp. 217–77), and it is to one of these that Erman refers the poem, as its grammar and syntax are in greater accord with the XVIIth than with the XIth Dynasty. (Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, 1927, p. 133, n. 1.)

it; thus the thought of death was used not to sadden but to stimulate to a greater enjoyment of life.[1] The following conveys a vivid impression of this poem and indicates the feeling and rhythm met with in Egyptian literature, although there are no rhyming lines :

Song of the House of the Blessed King Intef, which is written in front of the Harper.

' Well is it with this good prince, the goodly destiny hath suffered hurt.

Bodies pass away and others remain since the time of them that were before.

The gods that were aforetime rest in their pyramids, and likewise the noble and the glorified, buried in their pyramids.

They that build houses, their habitations are no more. What hath been done with them ?

I have heard the discourses of Imhotep and Hardedef, with whose words men speak every-

[1] Herodotus (ii. 78) describes a striking custom among the Egyptians : ' In the social banquets of the rich, as soon as the feast is ended, a man carries round a wooden figure of a corpse in its coffin, graven and painted so as to resemble the reality as nearly as possible, from one to two cubits long. And as he shows it to each of the guests, he says, " Look on this, and drink, and be merry ; for when thou art dead, such shalt thou be ".'

Herodotus's story, however, is entirely unconfirmed, and probably arose through his misunderstanding the banquets associated with mummies in many tomb-scenes, and confusing funeral banquets which were religious observances with convivial gatherings.

where—what are their habitations (now)? Their walls are destroyed, their habitations are no more, as if they had never been.[1]

None cometh from thence that he may tell us how they fare, that he may tell us what they need, that he may set our heart at rest (?), until we also go to the place whither they are gone.

Be glad, that thou mayest cause thine heart to forget that men will (one day) beatify thee.[2] Follow thy desire, so long as thou livest. Put myrrh on thine head, clothe thee in fine linen, and anoint thee with the genuine marvels of the things of the god.

Increase yet more the delights that thou hast, and let not thine heart grow faint. Follow thy desire, and do good to thyself (?). Do what thou requirest (?) upon earth, and vex not thine heart,—until that day of lamentation cometh to thee. Yet He with the Quiet Heart[3] heareth not their lamentation, and cries deliver no man from the underworld.'

'Spend the day happily and weary not thereof! Lo, none can (?) take his goods with him. Lo, none that hath departed can come again.'[4]

[1] This allusion to the walls and house of Imhotep is peculiarly effective. Although he was the famous architect of King Zoser, his own tomb has so entirely disappeared that 'the place thereof knows it no more'.

[2] i. e. the beatification of the dead at his funeral.

[3] Osiris, the god of the dead.

[4] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, tr. by Blackman, 1927, p. 133. Cf. also H. R. Hall, *Cambridge Ancient History*, i. 324; Maspero, *Études Égyptiennes*, i. 178 ff.; W. Max Müller, *Die Liebespoesie der alten Ägypter*, pp. 29, 35.

It would of course not be fair to judge of Imhotep's philosophy from so slender a basis as that presented by the ' Song of the Harper '. As his reputation was so enduring, there were doubtless precepts and proverbs enjoining a higher morality. His name is sometimes linked with those of two other famous Egyptian sages, i. e. Kegemni who lived in the reign of Huni, last king of the IIIrd Dynasty, and Ptah-hotpe, vizier of King Issi, of the Vth Dynasty, both of whom have bequeathed maxims of singular beauty.

We append one gem from the ' Instruction of Ptah-hotpe', which teaches the virtue of humility and will serve as an illustration of the higher morality of the Egyptians.

' If thou be grown great, after thou wast of small account, and have gotten thee substance, after that thou wast aforetime needy in the city which thou knowest, forget (?) not how it fared with thee in time past. Trust (?) not in thy riches, that have accrued to thee as a gift of God. *Thou art not better* (?) *than* another that is thine equal, to whom the same hath happened (i. e. impoverishment).'[1]

It is delightful to have voices speaking across so long a span of years and recalling the philosophy held by the wise men of an ancient nation, whose glory has now departed.

[1] A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, tr. by Blackman, 1927, p. 62.

Imhotep also filled the office of royal scribe—an important post, since government business was carried on in writing. We know of this office from an inscription in the Nubian temple of Debôt which dates from the time of the Nubian King Ezekher-Amūn, a contemporary of Ptolemy V, and which describes Imhotep as the ' chief scribe of grain for Upper and Lower Egypt '.[1] Doubtless in this office he formed the connecting link between Zoser and his subordinate officials. We shall see in the next Chapter that later on he became recognized as the ' patron of scribes '.

E. Imhotep as Astronomer

If the references to Imhotep in Hermetic literature can be trusted, he was also interested in astronomy and astrology, although no special observations are associated with his name. Doubtless he was a believer in the influence exerted by the heavenly bodies on the welfare of men, as was the fashion in the Pharaonic period.

To the god Thoth (Hermes) was attributed a special knowledge of astronomy and of many other sciences, and Imhotep was reputed to have been associated with that deity in astronomical observations.[2]

[1] In the temple at Edfu is another inscription in which Imhotep is described as ' scribe of the god ' (cf. p. 130).

[2] Various references to the Hermetic literature are given by

The faith that stars in their courses powerfully affected human destiny was well-nigh universal, and this faith led to a close study of the movements of the heavenly bodies, of eclipses, of occultations of the planets, of the length of the sidereal year, as well as to the identification of the sun, moon and stars with the principal deities in the Egyptian pantheon. Both the sun and moon were the objects of divine worship by the royal family and the nobles, as amongst the grandest of natural objects.[1] No wonder that some of the fundamental laws of astronomy were discovered and brought into intimate association both with national events and with the ordinary occurrences of life.

A remarkable degree of accuracy in the observation of the stars must have been required to show the Egyptians that the heliacal rising of the Dog-star Sothis (Sirius) would give them a fixed year provided that a quarter of a day was added for each year. The period when this Sothic year was introduced appears not to be definitely known, but it certainly goes far back in Egyptian history. The orientation of the pyramids is another proof of technical skill in watching the skies, and this

Sethe (*Imhotep*, p. 23). In a Greek horoscope, dated A. D. 138, Imhotep is associated with the god Hermes as an authority on astrology.

[1] The common people worshipped their local gods.

was attained in the third millennium B.C. All the pyramids are so built that their square bases have two sides facing east and west, and two facing north and south. The Step-Pyramid is the only pyramid the sides of which do not exactly face the cardinal points, the northern front being 4° 35′ east of the true north.[1]

Diodorus Siculus writes : ' There is no country where the positions and movements of the stars have been observed with such accuracy as in Egypt. Registers in which these observations are recorded have been kept during an incredible number of years.'[2]

F. Imhotep as a Magician-Physician

Imhotep probably enjoyed a high reputation both as magician and as physician.[3] We may

[1] H. Vyse, *Pyramids of Gizeh*, 1840–2, iii, p. 41. As a matter of fact, however, Egyptian orientating is nearly always wrong because most buildings were orientated by the Nile which was supposed to flow S.–N. Many of the tombs, &c., face E.–W. merely because a bend in the river makes the Nile flow locally in that direction. The N.–S. fiction is nearly always dealt with by excavators in their books and reports as ' local N.', ' local S.', &c.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, i, c. 1, lxxxi ; Herodotus, ii. 4. The most celebrated Egyptian records of the movements of the heavenly bodies are those in the royal tombs at Thebes. Cf. Le Page Renouf, *Life-Work*, iii, pp. 97 ff.

[3] There is no contemporary evidence of Imhotep having

briefly refer here to the twin offices of magician and physician, leaving a fuller discussion of the subject to a subsequent *excursus* on Egyptian medicine.

Magic and medicine were closely allied in the time of the Pharaohs. Magic is generally regarded as the parent of medicine and never lost hold of her offspring. By magic actions are implied such actions as persons do for their own or for others' benefit and which demand certain mysterious and miraculous powers for their performance. According to the Egyptian belief, wizardry could

been a physician. The fact, however, that by the time of Mycerinus in the IVth Dynasty he had apparently become a medical demigod and that in the Persian period he was worshipped as the deity of medicine is strong presumptive evidence of his distinction both in magic and in medicine.

We have also the evidence of Manetho the Egyptian historian that Imhotep was a physician in the time of Zoser, if we accept Sethe's convincing emendation. Eusebius's version of Manetho is as follows : *Σέσορθος, ὃς Ἀσκλήπιος παρὰ Αἰγυπτίοις ἐκλήθη διὰ τὴν ἰατρικήν·* As it seems highly improbable that Sesorthos (Zoser) was called Asklepios, Sethe proposes to emend the paragraph by inserting the words *ἐφ' οὗ Ἰμούθης* before the word *ὃς*. We then obtain the following reading ' Sesorthos (Zoser) under whom lived Imuthes (Imhotep), and who on account of his skill as a physician was looked upon as Asklepios', which accords with our other information about Imhotep. Cf. K. Sethe (*Imhotep*, p. 19) and G. Maspero (*J. des Savants*, 1902, pp. 575 ff.) for a fuller discussion of the subject. Lastly, in the *Hermetica* Imhotep is described as the ' first inventor of the art of healing ' (cf. p. 36).

work all kinds of wonders which were not possible by simple means.[1]

The operations of magic extended to all the events of daily life, including the simplest acts of household routine, as well as to the needs of the dead. Magic might be prophylactic of evil, curative of disease, prognostic of calamity, sometimes benevolent towards certain persons, at other times malevolent. One common characteristic was the use of a mystic incomprehensible gibberish to convey an impression of wisdom behind it. It is difficult to draw any hard-and-fast line between religion and magic, since the latter was in large measure a form of applied religion (*religio privata*). Magicians kept a box of materials and instruments always ready so as to apply their art to any special circumstances that arose.[2]

In the Westcar Papyrus [3] allusion is made to a

[1] Cf. the article on ' Magic ' by A. H. Gardiner, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, viii, p. 262.

[2] Magic was practised in England not so many years ago and even to-day is not extinct. Cf. Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, 1895, pp. 53, 56 ; C. K. Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Scotland*, 1884, p. 21.

[3] Erman, *Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar*, i, p. 7. The Westcar Papyrus contains in the form of a popular romance an account of the wonders wrought by magicians for the entertainment of King Khufu (Cheops). Cf. also Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, tr. by Blackman, 1927, pp. 36 ff.

wonderful feat of magic exhibited by the chief ritualist of King Zoser, who was probably none other than Imhotep. The full details of the magical performance are not given in the Papyrus, but the allusion occurs in a speech made to King Khufu (Cheops) by one of his sons who described the magic as having been performed in the days of King Zoser by his chief ritualist.

Although Imhotep was a noted magician, it appears that medicine was the mistress he most zealously wooed ; it is his eminence as a healer of the sick that has given him imperishable fame, and that led eventually to his deification. For a time he was probably both court physician and vizier to King Zoser ; he evidently moved in the highest social circles.

As we shall see later on, magic and medicine were closely associated in therapeutics, that method of treatment being selected which was most suited to the malady in question. Magical papyri are leavened with medical prescriptions, while medical papyri, such as the Ebers Papyrus, are constantly interspersed with incantations and invocations.

Unhappily, nothing is known of Imhotep's special work as a physician. The important office of vizier must have added prestige to his name and inspired confidence in his patients. Further, the fact that he later on received divine honours—a

most unusual event except in the case of a Pharaoh —proves him to have been a man of rare distinction. A fine type of scholar-physician, he evidently rendered service both to the bodies and spirits of the sick and afflicted to whom it was his privilege to minister. We cannot doubt that for him *sedare dolorem divinum opus*.

G. The Necropolis of Memphis

We have no information as to the length of Imhotep's life. The high office of vizier to which he attained, the vast enterprise of the Step-Pyramid of which he was the architect, and the various other offices which he filled appear to indicate that he lived to an advanced age. According to the Ptolemaic Pedestal now in the British Museum (cf. p. 120), he died on the 17th day of the Egyptian month Mesore (July 1st), although we do not know the exact year, and was buried on the 23rd day of the same month (July 7th).[1] On both these anniversaries were celebrated commemorative festivals in Ptolemaic times, i. e. after deification.

Imhotep appears to have been a man of high and unsullied character, with a wide outlook on

[1] These dates are of course reckoned according to the calendrical customs of the period. Actually, in the IIIrd Dynasty, the months and days did not correspond with those in use from the Persian period onwards.

life, as well as a tender heart towards suffering humanity.[1] He could fill the high office of vizier, involving a daily audience with the reigning Pharaoh, and undertake a vast enterprise such as the construction of the Step-Pyramid. As a magician-physician he could heal the sick, comfort the sorrowing, and bring solace to the dying with the assurance that thanks to his magic spells and words of power all would go well with them in the next world. We may therefore be confident that when, after a career devoted to the public service and to the relief of his afflicted fellow-men, he was at length laid to rest, a great concourse of mourners, including many state officials and dignitaries, joined in the funeral procession and accompanied the mummy to its last home. Moreover, with the knowledge we possess of the funerary ceremonial in the early dynasties, and with a little imagination, we can readily picture to ourselves the various episodes on the way to the vast necropolis of Memphis.

After the embalmment of the body, a process which occupied several weeks, the corpse would be swathed in fine linen bandages and provided

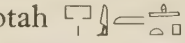
[1] Readers who would like to obtain a vivid impression of social life in Memphis in the days of Imhotep may consult Ch. ix in D. A. Mackenzie's *Egyptian Myth and Legend*, 1913. Imhotep himself is introduced on p. 119.

with talismans round the neck and on the chest. It would next be placed in a four-sided somewhat plain coffin which was then covered with flowers and ferried across the Nile on a richly decorated barque, accompanied by several other boats filled with friends and relations. Meanwhile the funerary priest, i. e. the new *Kher-ḥeb* who had succeeded the deceased, made offerings and libations to the gods. Incense would be burnt before the mummy, accompanied by the customary recitations and invocations.[1]

The river safely crossed, the coffin together with its barque was transferred to a sledge and drawn by oxen to the already constructed mastaba, every stage of the journey being accompanied by a complicated ceremonial. Egyptian mourners were highly demonstrative and in the case of Imhotep doubtless there was pathetic wailing of his friends and relations, as well as of the sick and afflicted patients to whom he had formerly ministered. Especially affected would be the women who, with bared breasts uttered impassioned cries, slapped their faces, and scattered ashes on their heads, everything being done to glorify the deceased and

[1] Many details and illustrations of funeral ceremonies are given by A. H. Gardiner (*The Tomb of Amenemhēt*, 1915), who discusses scenes and texts very fully, with abundant bibliographical references.

to indicate the grievous loss and solitude of the survivors.

Imhotep's mastaba, which will probably some day be unearthed, was probably situated at Ankh-towē just outside the city of Memphis, near to the Serapieion and the modern village of Abusir. It was therefore close to the pyramid which the deceased had built for his patron and royal master Zoser. Near to this spot was later on situated the Pi-î-m-ḥotp-si-ptah  , 'the temple of Imhotep, son of Ptah',[1] which the Greeks called 'the Asklepieion.'[2]

As regards Imhotep's relations, few details have come down to us. His father was a famous court

[1] Brugsch, *Dictionnaire Géographique*, p. 1098.

[2] In the *Hermetica* occurs a statement that Imhotep was buried in the Libyan hills, which must probably have been in the Fayûm, near Crocodilopolis (Arsinoe). The following is an address by Hermes to his pupil who is described as the grandson of Imhotep: 'Asclepius your grandfather, the first inventor of the art of healing, and to whom a temple has been dedicated in the Libyan mountain, near the shore of crocodiles. There lies the material man, that is the body; but the rest of him, or rather the whole of him—it is conscious life that constitutes the man's whole being—has returned to heaven. And to this day he renders to the sick by his divine power all the aid which he used to render them by his medicinal art.' Cf. W. Scott, *Hermetica*, i, pp. 358–9; iii, pp. 221, 223–4.

It is almost certain, however, that Sakkarah was the place of sepulture. Doubtless his grave was near the Step-Pyramid of his patron Zoser, in accordance with Egyptian custom.

architect or master-builder named Kanofer *Kꜣ-nfr*, as we learn from an inscription found in the Wadi Hammamat, a valley leading from Coptos down to the Red Sea. The inscription gives a genealogical tree of twenty-five architects beginning with Kanofer and ending with the architect Chnem-eb-re (Khnum-ib-re).[1]

His mother was named Khreduonkh *Ḫrdw-ʿnḫ* and his wife Ronpe-nofret *Rnpt-nfrt*.[2] Imhotep appears to have had one son

[1] Cf. Appendix C.

[2] The names Imhotep, Kanofer and Ronpe-nofret were not uncommon under the Old Kingdom, while that of Khreduonkh does not appear till the Graeco-Roman period. One of the Pharaohs was named Imhotep, although the date of his reign is uncertain. At Berlin is preserved the stela of a man named Imhotep, who in one picture is seen praying before Osiris, in another before Osiris-Apis. A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, p. 217.

The mastaba-tomb of another man named Imhotep, a famous official of one of the XIIth Dynasty kings named Sesostris (Senusert), was discovered at the South Pyramid of Lisht in 1914. *Ancient Egypt*, 1915, p. 146.

Another Imhotep, who bore the titles ' Royal Scribe ' and ' Child of the Nursery ', lived at Thebes in the reign of Amenophis III (*ca.* 1410–1375 B. C.). His tomb is at Thebes. Gardiner and Weigall, *Topographical Catalogue of Private Tombs at Thebes*, p. 24 (No. 102). Persons of the same name are also mentioned by Brugsch, *Z. f. Ägyptische Sprache*, 1884, xxii, pp. 118 ff., and by Lieblein, *Dictionnaire des Noms hiéroglyphiques*, 1891, ii, p. 1036. Cf. also A. Mariette, *Mastabas de l'Ancien Empire*, 1889, p. 198. The name Imhotep

named Re-hotp, if the pedigree given in Appendix C can be relied upon. This Re-hotp also became a notable architect and a chief burgomaster.

We have now dealt *seriatim* with the various offices and activities which filled up Imhotep's busy life. He appears to have been a man of high intelligence as well as of strong moral fibre ; we may rank him with the greatest Egyptians known to history.[1]

As we shall see in the next chapters, it was not Imhotep's destiny to lie forgotten in one of the numerous mastabas in the necropolis of Memphis, in which repose so many notable Egyptians. A far higher distinction awaited him than any Pharaoh could confer, for posterity raised him to the rank of

and its Greek equivalent Imouthes became common in Ptolemaic times.

In ancient Egypt there appears to have been a fortress called the ' Gate of Imhotep '. Erman and Ranke, *Aegypten*, 1923, p. 628. Roeder suggests that this may perhaps have been built by the subject of this monograph (Pauly, *Real-Encyclopädie*, ix. 1213).

[1] F. Ll. Griffith writes : ' Men of genius were not wanting in the long history of Egypt ; two doctors, Imhōtp (Imuthes), the architect of Zoser in the IIIrd Dynasty, and Amenōphis (Amenhotp), son of Hap, the wise scribe under Amenophis III in the XVIIIth, eventually received the honours of deification ; and Hardadf under Cheops of the IVth Dynasty was little behind these two in the estimation of posterity.' *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., ix, p. 46.

the Egyptian deity of medicine, and gave him a place among the immortals whose name will be held in everlasting honour. *Non moritur cujus fama vivit.*

H. The Contemporaneity of Imhotep with King Zoser

Before concluding this chapter it may be well to point out that the contemporaneity[1] of Imhotep with King Zoser (*ca.* 2980 B. C.) has only lately been accepted by Egyptologists as a historical fact. Thus Brugsch, writing as recently as 1890, stated that ' the origin and existence of this Memphite deity Imhotep belonged to the latest periods of Egyptian history.'[2] Until recent years no satisfactory explanation was forthcoming as to why Imhotep suddenly appeared quite late in Egyptian history and was straightway found occupying a rank amongst the ancient national deities. The various explanations of the stage of divinity were based on current mythical speculations.

Brugsch suggested that Nefertem and Imhotep were the same person, the ancient Memphitic deity Nefertem being afterwards called Imhotep.[3]

[1] On the contemporaneity of Imhotep with Zoser, cf. R. Weil, ' La II^{e} et la III^{e} Dynasties ' (*Annales du Musée Guimet*, xxv, 1908, pp. 37, 51 ff.).

[2] H. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, 1890, p. 526.

[3] H. Brugsch, *Geschichte Aegyptens unter den Pharaonen*, 1877, p. 45 ; *Dictionnaire Géographique*, p. 234.

Others held that Imhotep had resulted from the splitting up of some older deity into two different personalities, each with different functions, as, for example, Maēt was supposed to have sprung from Thoth.[1] According to this view Imhotep was regarded as an emanation of Ptah or, what is much the same, as a son. Pierret held that Imhotep, the Memphite god, was a resuscitated form of Ptah, just as Nefer-hotpe was regarded as the resuscitated form of Osiris.[2] Even as recently as 1902 Professor A. H. Sayce held that an epithet of a deity might be personified. Thus referring to Imhotep he says : ' Elsewhere an epithet of a god was transformed into his son ; at Memphis, for example, Imhotep, " he who comes in peace ", a title of Ptah, became his son and the second person in the trinity.'[3]

Early references to Imhotep such as the Pedi-

[1] G. Foucart, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xlviii (1903), p. 362. Wilkinson writes about the Egyptian Asklepios, i. e. Imhotep : ' I am rather inclined to consider him that healing and preserving power of the creator (Ptah) which averted calamities and illness from mankind.' *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, ed. by Birch, iii (1878), p. 205. Cf. also Wiedemann, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1913, vi, p. 276 ; Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Extra Volume, 1904, p. 186.

[2] P. Pierret, *Le Panthéon Égyptien*, 1881, p. 78.

[3] A. H. Sayce, *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, 1902, p. 231.

gree of the Architects (App. C), pointing to his having existed as early as the IIIrd Dynasty, were regarded as merely legendary or possibly fabrications by priests for special purposes. The ' Song of the Harper ', in which Imhotep is referred to, dated from long after Zoser's reign, viz. to the time of one of the Intef Kings (cf. p. 23). Again, until the discovery in 1903 of the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus (cf. p. 45), our only authority for the fact that Imhotep came to be regarded as the ' patron of scribes ' and as a kind of demigod dated from the New Kingdom (1580–1350 B.C.), while the ' Legend of the Seven Years' Famine ', inscribed on the island of Sehêl near Aswan and in which Imhotep is specified as architect and vizier of the King Zoser, was as recent as the Ptolemaic Period (323–30 B.C.).

Of a still more recent date are other authorities such as the Hermetic books which refer to Imhotep's association with astronomy and which may be roughly attributed to the IIIrd or IVth century of our era. No attempt was made to connect these detached references and to establish cohesion between them.

It is to the distinguished German Egyptologist Erman that we owe the first suggestion that Imhotep was originally a man of flesh and blood who lived in the time of King Zoser, and

who was so distinguished as vizier, architect and magician-physician, that he was eventually raised to the rank of demigod and afterwards to that of full deity. This view has been powerfully supported by K. Sethe's exhaustive Monograph, in which he sums up with consummate skill the cumulative evidence that Imhotep passed through the several stages just described. Since the publication of Sethe's studies almost all Egyptologists have accepted this view, which solves many problems and to which considerable support is lent by the recent discovery of a statue of Zoser with the name Imhotep inscribed upon it (p. 11).

There are, however, a few Egyptologists who still remain unconvinced that Imhotep actually lived in the days of King Zoser, and among them G. Foucart is probably the most distinguished. He regards the Legend of the Seven Years' Famine to be untrustworthy as a historical document, the ' Song of the Harper ' as a folk-song, the ' Pedigree of the Architects ' as apocryphal. For details of his argument reference must be made to his article; his conclusion in brief is that a certain King Imhotep who may have belonged to the VIth Dynasty and of whom scarcely anything is known, has been absorbed by a god, a process which he thinks presents no insuperable difficulty, especially in Egypt where every king in course of time was

deified. This is indeed a different view from that described in this volume !

We think that our readers will agree that Foucart's theory creates far greater difficulties than it solves.[1]

[1] For fuller details readers are referred to G. Foucart's article in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xlviii (1903), p. 362.

CHAPTER III

IMHOTEP AS A MEDICAL DEMIGOD

IN the ancient world the term ' hero ', ' hero-god ' or ' demigod ' was applied to mortals who, in virtue of some special distinction, either physical, moral or intellectual, had after their death come to be regarded by the common people as superhuman and had been accorded a semi-divine worship. Egypt, Greece and Rome all recognized such demigods, although the term did not always bear the identical interpretation.[1]

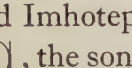
Few Egyptians attained greater distinction than did the contemporary of Pharaoh Zoser whose earthly career has been dealt with in the preceding pages. We cannot wonder, therefore, that in due course he was singled out for the dignity of demigod, which many centuries later was followed by full apotheosis.

Erman, speaking of the veneration felt by the Egyptians for those who had been leaders of the nation in earlier days and who had been raised to the status of demigod, writes :

' They had previously been looked upon as people of renown ; now some of them were regarded as demigods. . . . Among them is Imhotep, a man who belonged to the court of Zoser, one of

[1] *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi, p. 647 (Art. on ' Heroes and Hero-gods ').

the earliest Kings of Egypt, and who was remembered by the people as the celebrated royal architect, and as the author of ancient literature.' [1]

The discovery in 1903 of an important Greek papyrus at Oxyrhynchus in the Fayûm by Grenfell and Hunt enables us to trace the worship of the demigod Imhotep back to the times of Mycerinus  , the son of Khufu (Cheops), who reigned *ca.* 2850 B.C., i. e. about 130 years after the commencement of Zoser's reign.[2] In the said Papyrus, which was probably composed in the first or in the early part of the second century A. D., we read that the worship of Imhotep had decayed in the troublous times preceding that monarch [3]

[1] A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, 1907, p. 173.

[2] Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part xi (1915), pp. 221 ff. The said Papyrus [No. 1381], itself a copy of an earlier one, was apparently found in the temple of Imhotep at the time of Nectanebo II (361–343 B. C.). Opinions may differ as to its reliability as a historical document. Attributions of great antiquity to religious foundations must be accepted with reserve, since during the Saite age there was an archaizing tendency which led to the production of religious documents eulogizing the ancient Pharaohs. On the other hand Grenfell and Hunt write: 'So far as it goes, the evidence [of this Papyrus] favours the view that the worship of Imhotep began in the early days of Egyptian history' (op. cit., p. 223). Before the discovery of this Papyrus the demigod stage of Imhotep was generally assigned by Erman and other Egyptologists to the time of the New Kingdom, i. e. about 1580 B. C.

[3] This decay in the worship of Imhotep seems to indicate

and that his temple was largely deserted, when King Mycerinus took steps to restore the worship of Imhotep and also made a large present of land to his temple. We also learn that this temple was resorted to by sick and afflicted persons and that incubation was practised.

In later years many statuettes of the demigod were manufactured, some of which are still extant.[1] We shall describe in turn :

A. The Worship of the Demigod Imhotep.
B. Incubation.
C. Statuettes of the Demigod.

A. The Worship of the Demigod

The worship of Imhotep doubtless originated at his tomb, which was probably not far removed from the Step-Pyramid which had been erected, probably by Imhotep himself, for his royal master Zoser. The mastaba of the famous magician-physician by degrees became a place of pilgrimage,

that the demigod stage had begun even before the reign of Mycerinus.

[1] Figs. vi–ix represent Imhotep as a demigod. Figs. vi and vii are taken from the *Catalogue des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire : Statues de Divinités*, i, p. 17 ; ii, Pl. iv. Fig. viii is a statuette preserved in the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, London, and is remarkable for the row of uraei arranged round the seat as a decoration. Fig. ix is in the Berlin Staats-Museum.

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especially for sick and suffering persons, and apparently, as stated in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus already referred to, some temples were erected in his honour.[1] The details of his worship will be dealt with under the heading of Incubation, where we shall find some remarkable illustrations of miraculous recoveries from disease. All the impressive ritual which stirs the imagination, and acts so powerfully by means of suggestion on the mentality of sick and suffering persons was doubtless resorted to, and the fame of Imhotep as the superhuman healer of disease began to spread, although it probably did not extend far from his mastaba. National recognition followed later. Whether there was any difference in the worship paid to demigods and that paid to full deities is doubtful. It seems *a priori* probable that the lesser dignitary would be accorded a simpler cult as well as a more local one.[2]

[1] Nectanebo II, during whose reign the Papyrus was discovered, is said to have been so greatly interested in the story of Imhotep that he enriched the god with three hundred and thirty arurae (*ca.* 247 acres) more of corn-land, especially because he had heard through the Papyrus that the god had been worshipped with marks of great reverence by Mycerinus.

[2] In Greece there were marked distinctions, both in the time, place and character of the worship accorded to heroes or demigods and to full deities. Sacrifices made to heroes were made towards evening or at night, and on low sacrificial hearths, only black and male animals being used. Sacrifices to

It was also during the demigod period that the custom arose amongst Egyptian scribes of pouring a libation out of their water-bowl to Imhotep ' that most famous of scribes '. This custom, to which Schäfer first called attention,[1] doubtless arose from the scribe's desire to prosper his own task, and the words of invocation ' Water from the water-bowl of every scribe to thy *Ka*, O Imhotep ! ' were frequently inscribed on the roll of papyrus which so often lies on the knees of the statuettes of the demigod. The scribe used also to express the hope that any successor who used the same bowl would offer a prayer that would provide him with 1,000 loaves and jugs of beer in the next world. These funerary offerings were intended to sustain the deceased during his journey through the Underworld.

A still clearer reference to the subject is given by A. H. Gardiner [2] and occurs on a funeral stela belonging to the reign of Amenophis III (1411–1375 B. C.), where we read : ' May the *wʿb* priests stretch forth for thee their hand with water upon

the gods, on the other hand, were made in broad daylight and on raised altars, the heads of the victims being turned up to heaven, instead of being turned to the ground as in the case of heroes. E. Rohde, *Psyche*, 1925, p. 116.

[1] *Z. f. Ägyptische Sprache*, xxxvi (1898), p. 147.

[2] *Z. f. Ägyptische Sprache*, xl (1902–3), p. 146; cf. also A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Aegypten*, p. 87.

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the ground like that which is done for Imhotep from the end of the water-bowl.' Evidently therefore by the XVIIIth Dynasty Imhotep had become distinguished from other Egyptian celebrities by a special rite practised in his honour as a demigod.

It is a curious fact that Herodotus states that the Egyptians differed from the Greeks in paying no divine honours to heroes.[1] By this he probably meant that there were no heroes in Egypt in exactly the same sense as used by the Greeks. For there were undoubtedly deified persons who may be designated as heroes or demigods. Indeed, in the Hellenistic period there was actually in Egypt a city called the 'city of heroes' (*Ἡρώων πόλις*), now known as Tell el-Maskhûta (Pithom).

A similar process of gradual elevation to the rank of demigod and finally to full deity occurred in the case of another noted sage, viz. Amenophis, the son of Hapu, who was vizier under King Amenophis III.[2]

B. Incubation

By incubation is meant the practice of sleeping or at any rate passing the night in some sacred

[1] Herodotus, ii. 50.

[2] An excellent account of this demigod is given by W. R. Dawson, *Aegyptus*, vii (1926), pp. 113–38.

spot, such as the court of a temple, in the hope of receiving a divine message or revelation, usually in favour of a sick devotee. This practice was widely adopted in ancient times and even to-day is resorted to in certain semi-civilized countries.

The patients who had generally been attracted to a shrine by the reputation of its deity as a healer of disease were received by a priest who stirred the imagination of suffering and suggestible persons by recounting past miraculous cures and the certain success of remedies that would be suggested. After the recitation of appropriate spells and incantations, which would help to induce a recipient state of mind, the patient was advised to try incubation or temple sleep, during which a response from the deity might be given. In the night the priest, assuming the guise of the god, presented himself before the patient to whom if awake oracular advice was given.[1] Should the devotee be asleep the deity himself appeared in a vision, and, after making sure of the identity of the person addressed, gave precise instructions as to the treatment to be adopted. In other cases vague indications were given in the dream which was to some extent artificially solicited, such indications being then interpreted by the priest. In certain emotional

[1] A papyrus in the Louvre (No. 3229) contains formulae and incantations for inducing dreams.

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conditions which had been fostered by the sacredness of the spot as well as by an impressive ritual, a state of hyper-aesthesia was readily excited in which a neurotic patient was enabled to see, hear and feel things that cannot be perceived at ordinary times owing to obtuseness of the senses. Such a hyper-sensitiveness readily predisposes to the perception of visions. Further the ordinary nightmare with its terrifying phantoms, now so easily explicable as a physiological phenomenon, might easily by ignorant and excitable dreamers be regarded as a real apparition of spirits.

We can easily imagine how during the long silent night watches many suffering men and women, perhaps tossing from side to side in their pain, were quietly worshipping the great Imhotep on whom all their hopes were centred, and obeying the beautiful Egyptian maxim that has been preserved to us in the Papyrus of Ani : 'When thou worshippest thy god, do it quietly and without ostentation in the sanctuary of god, to whom clamour is abhorrent. Pray to him with a longing heart, in which all thy words are hidden. So will he grant thy request, and hear that which thou sayest and accept thy offering.'[1]

In the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus already referred

[1] Erman, *Egyptian Religion*, 1907, p. 84. E. A. Budge, *The Papyrus of Ani*, 1913, i, p. 103.

to, the writer named Nechautis, who performed the duties of an archidikastes and who had apparently found the Papyrus in Imhotep's temple,[1] tells a remarkable story of a vision in which Imhotep appeared to a devotee, and which throws a vivid light on the practice of incubation as just described.[2]

The story relates to the mother of Nechautis who was attacked with quartan ague. This illness induced her friends to seek assistance at the temple of Imhotep, who appeared to the sick woman in dreams and cured her by ' simple remedies ', for which both mother and son showed their thanks by sacrifices.

Subsequently Nechautis himself fell ill, suffering from pain in his right side, violent fever, loss of

[1] It was a common literary artifice in Egypt to allege that religious or literary compositions had been found in temples and dated from ancient times, so as to increase their importance. The following are examples of the practice : (1) The late funerary papyri in the British Museum (Nos. 10081 and 10255) have rubrics stating that their contents were found inscribed on a leather roll of the time of Amenophis III in the temple of Osiris at Abydos. (2) The 64th Chapter of the Book of the Dead has a rubric stating that it was found by Hardedef at Chemmis under the feet of a statue of a god in the reign of Mycerinus. (3) Certain passages of Papyrus Ebers are attributed to a king of the 1st Dynasty, the text having been found under the feet of a statue of Anubis.

[2] For fuller details reference must be made to Grenfell and Hunt's translation. An excellent *résumé* of the story appears in the *Lancet*, 1915, ii, p. 1204.

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breath and coughing, associated with the pain in his side. He too, in his turn, and accompanied by his mother, hastened to the shrine and lapsed into half-conscious sleep. Meanwhile his mother, who was wide awake, suddenly perceived in a vision a being of superhuman stature,[1] clothed in shining raiment and carrying a book, who regarded the patient intently from head to foot and then vanished. When the mother had recovered from her surprise at the vision, she woke up the invalid and found that his fever had departed, leaving him in a profuse perspiration. As soon as the invalid was able to speak he began to recount what he had seen in a dream, i. e. the same vision that his mother had witnessed whilst awake. The pains in his side soon ceased, the god having given him an ' assuaging cure '.

The mother and son at once proceeded to express their gratitude, through the priest who served the god in the ceremonies, by the customary sacrifices and, it may be presumed, ' donaria '. Imhotep, however, notified that such were not the recompense and signs of gratitude he required. He wished Nechautis to fulfil the promise made years ago to re-edit in Greek an ancient Egyptian book in honour of himself.

[1] When a deity appeared to a mortal his divinity was shown by his superhuman stature.

Nechautis then goes on to say that, since the divine master regretted the non-composition of the divine book, which invoked his providence and was filled with the story of his divinity and inventiveness, he set about the dutiful task, which he thus describes :

' Since thou hadst once noticed, Master, that I was neglecting the divine book invoking thy providence and filled with thy divinity, I hastened to the inspired task of the history. And I hope to extend by my proclamation the fame of thy inventiveness ; for I unfolded truly by a physical treatise in another book the convincing account of the creation of the world. Throughout I have filled up defects and struck out superfluities. . . . Hence, Master, I conjecture the book has been completed in accordance with thy favour, not with my aim ; for such a record in writing suits thy divinity. And as the discoverer of this art, Asklepios,[1] greatest of Gods and my teacher, thou art distinguished by the thanks of all men. For every gift of a votive offering or sacrifice presently

[1] i. e. Imhotep. This is an illustration of the concealment of an Egyptian deity under a Greek name. The quotation also throws an interesting light on the system of propaganda practised by the devotees of Imhotep. Every effort was made, both by word of mouth and by written records, to broadcast any marvellous cures, in order further to enhance the prestige of the god of healing. Thus cause and effect reacted on each other in such wise as to establish a circular reaction. The greater the prestige the more numerous the cures and vice versa. Cf. W. Schubart, *Ägypten von Alexander dem Grossen bis auf Mohammed*, p. 314.

perishes, but a written record is an undying meed of gratitude, renewing its youth in the memory. Every Greek tongue will tell thy story and every man will worship the son of Ptah, Imouthes.'

The address closes with the following proclamation :

' Assemble all ye benevolent and good persons ! Depart all wicked and godless ones ! Assemble all ye . . . who have been cured of diseases through serving the god, all ye who practise the healing art, all ye who zealously strive after a virtuous life, ye who in the past have been blessed with abundance of good things, ye who have been delivered from the perils of the sea ! For every place has been penetrated by the saving grace of the god.'[1]

The text then proceeds to recount the history of Asklepios (Imhotep), son of Hephaistos,[2] and the manner in which he told Mycerinus to busy himself with his tomb. It is clear that though Imhotep was not yet recognized as a full deity, he was to some extent worshipped in the same manner as a god.[3]

[1] *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part xi (1915), pp. 224, 229, 231. In this proclamation several fresh titles are conferred on Imhotep, viz. ' protector of physicians ', ' pursuer of virtue ' and ' protector of sea-farers '.

[2] The fact that Hephaistos is here equated with Ptah indicates the late date of the Papyrus. Milne states that there is a mixed Graeco-Egyptian coin-type of Ptah-Hephaistos (*History of Egypt under Roman Rule*, 1924, p. 193).

[3] K. Sethe, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi, p. 647.

The demigod stage appears to have lasted from the reign of Mycerinus until the beginning of the Persian period if we accept Sethe's views referred to in the next Chapter. That period would therefore extend over twenty-three centuries (from *ca.* 2850 B.C. to 525 B.C.), after which the zenith of full apotheosis was reached.[1]

C. Statuettes of Imhotep as Medical Demigod

In most museums of Egyptology may be seen one or more bronze statuettes representing a somewhat diminutive dolichocephalic person of youthful, aristocratic appearance, who is evidently a learned scribe and who usually has on his knees an unrolled papyrus which he is reading attentively.[2]

In these figurines (Figs. vi–ix) Imhotep presents obvious signs of his human origin.[3] He

[1] The titles of demigod and deity are occasionally used indiscriminately. Thus in the Hermetic work entitled 'Asklepios', Hermes still refers to Imhotep as a demigod. A similar confusion occurs in regard to Asklepios whom the Greeks sometimes spoke of as demigod, sometimes as god. Cf. also L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 1921, p. 236.

[2] A statuette in the Cairo Museum (No. 38063) shows a scribe's palette lying on the papyrus near the left hand. Cf. Daressy, *Statues de Divinités*, 1903, i, p. 23.

[3] Further details of these statuettes of the demigod will be found on p. 46.

appears in the figure of an ordinary man, clothed in the simple garments of primitive days, without sceptre or *ankh* or the peculiar beard worn by the gods.[1] These statuettes, usually from 12 to 20 cm. high, represent Imhotep as demigod, and belong in the great majority of cases to the Saite or Renaissance period of Egyptian art, which corresponds roughly with the XXVIth Dynasty (633–525 B.C.) The best of these images are executed with unusual grace and delicacy, the face being well moulded and expressive, while the costume and the adornments are typically Egyptian in character. Amongst the finest images are those at Cairo, the British Museum and the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in London; there are also excellent specimens at Paris, Berlin, Turin and Leiden. Many figures are enriched with gold, silver and precious stones; in other cases the inscriptions are inlaid with gold.

Although most of the statuettes are in solid bronze, some are made of glazed ware, steatite, imitation lapis lazuli, electron, basalt or marble;[2] at Cairo two specimens are of bronze with wooden seats (acacia and cedar). There are also some amulet figures at the Wellcome Historical Museum

[1] Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, 1907, p. 174.

[2] A basalt statue 45 cm. high (*ca.* 660 B.C.) is preserved at the Louvre in the Salle des Monuments Religieux.

in London, as well as at Liverpool, Berlin and Turin.[1] The costume worn is usually that of a priest, a finely pleated apron hanging down over the knees and legs ; at other times the latter are bare. In one specimen at Cairo the legs appear as if they were bandaged owing to the tightly fitting skirt ;[2] occasionally there is nudity.[3] A closely fitted cap usually covers the head, although in other cases this is bald. A handsome necklace with four or more rows of beads is worn in many instances ; occasionally a pectoral is suspended by a cord. Although the sitting posture is usual, a few standing figures are known, where the roll of papyrus is held in the hand or under the arm. In rare cases the right hand grasps a pen, the left a roll of papyrus. In one instance a cynocephalus baboon is held up.[4]

At the Cairo Museum of Antiquities are exhibited twenty-one statuettes, some of them of a highly artistic character. The British Museum possesses ten bronze and four faience figures. At the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum are forty-eight speci-

[1] E. Holländer, *Äsculap und Venus*, 1928, pp. 247, 249.

[2] G. Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization*, p. 105.

[3] A. Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, p. 174.

[4] As Imhotep was regarded as the god of learning he became associated with the animals sacred to Thoth, e. g. the ibis and cynocephalic baboon. In later times he absorbed the duties of Thoth, as ' scribe of the gods '.

mens, including two standing ones. The Ashmolean Museum at Oxford possesses three statuettes. At Berlin are one standing and three seated figures. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, possesses six standing and one sitting images. The Louvre [1] at Paris has about fifty specimens, and the Musée Guimet two. Turin possesses five statuettes, four in bronze and one in blue glazed ware. At the Hermitage Museum, Petrograd, there are nine bronze images and one of glazed ware.

In many cases dedicatory inscriptions are added on the base, giving the name of the donor, who was probably a sick person seeking health, or a grateful patient who had been cured. Thus the statuettes are votive in character.

The following is the inscription on one of the figures at Cairo, and gives the name of the donor followed by that of his father : ' Imhotep son of Ptah, born of Khreduonkh : Imhotep endowed with life ; Penek son of Wohibrē.' Another inscription at Cairo (No. 38064) includes a specific prayer asking for ' great length of days and a great and happy old age '.

At the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum

[1] One of these, recently acquired, has on its base a Phoenician inscription which reads . . . ' to Waphrê, son of Echmounyaton ' (? given by the god Eshmun). Cf. *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xxiii (1924), p. 2.

two figures bear the following inscriptions: 'Mose son of Pedu-Ptah' (Ptolemaic Period, *ca.* 300 B.C.) and 'Petamonsamtowē'. At the British Museum, one figure is dedicated to Imhotep by Ptah-mose, and another by a devotee who is also called Imhotep. In the same collection is a figure of the demigod in the form of a baboon reading a papyrus. This is probably a survival of animal worship, the baboon being sacred to Thoth. At University College, London, is a figure dedicated by Wenamon son of Ta-Khred-Khons. At New York two open papyrus scrolls on the lap of the images have the following inscriptions: 'Imhotep, son of Ptah, born of Khreduonkh' and 'Imhotep, son of the living Ptah'. One figure at Berlin (No. 2517) bears the inscription: 'Water from the water-bowl of every scribe to thy *Ka*, O Imhotep!'[1]

The seat occupied by sitting figures is usually plain; in other cases elaborate mouldings are added, while in one of the finest examples at the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum the top of the seat is adorned with a row of about twenty uraei.

The human appearance of the figure represented in these statuettes is regarded by Erman as proving that they belong to the period in which Imhotep was still regarded as a demigod and had not yet

[1] *Königliche Museen zu Berlin, Ausführliches Verzeichniss der Aegyptischen Altertümer*, p. 299.

attained to the full status of deity.[1] These bronze figures form a striking contrast with the pictures of the god Imhotep as met with in the Graeco-Roman period, when he wears the costume and beard of a full deity, and holds in his hands the symbol of life and the *uas* sceptre.

[1] Erman and Ranke, *Aegypten*, 1923, p. 477.

CHAPTER IV

IMHOTEP AS DEITY OF MEDICINE

WELLNIGH twenty-five centuries elapsed between the time when Imhotep held office under the Pharaoh Zoser and the time when he was raised to the rank of full deity of medicine. His apotheosis appears to have taken place somewhere about 525 B. C., the year in which Egypt was conquered by Cambyses and became a Persian province (Frontispiece).[1]

The preceding period in Egyptian history, lasting from the expulsion of the Assyrians in 654 B. C. to the Persian Conquest in 525 B. C. and corresponding with the XXVIth Dynasty, is known as the Saitic Restoration period and formed one of the most brilliant epochs in Egyptian history. With

[1] The frontispiece is reproduced from J. F. Champollion's *Monuments de l'Égypte et de la Nubie*, 1835–45, i, Pl. lxxviii, and is stated by that author accurately to represent the colours of the mural relief of the deity at Philae. He further states that the original was in the pronaos of the great temple of Isis, but it is probable that this temple was at that time confused with the adjoining temple of Imhotep, and that the relief was one of those in the latter. The colours of the figure and costume are more elaborate than those usually seen in Egyptian temples.

The corrupted Ptolemaic inscription associated with the frontispiece must have read : ' Words spoken by Imhotep the great, son of Ptah, dwelling in Philae, the great, the (healer ?) of all pain when one calleth to him in any place.'

X. THE TRIAD OF MEMPHIS: PTAH, IMHOTEP AND SEKHMET

the return of ordered government a great national revival took place resulting in increased economic prosperity. Industry flourished, art revived, a veneration for the glorious history of the Pyramid Age impressed itself on the soul of the nation. The worship of the early Pharaohs who had ruled at Memphis was restored and the ritual of their mortuary services was resuscitated and endowed. Even the pyramids were repaired on an extensive scale.

As a further indication of the desire to pay honour to those who in former days had brought glory to the nation, the famous Imhotep, who twenty-five centuries ago had played so important a part in the reign of King Zoser, and had since been raised to the rank of medical demigod, was now advanced to the status of full deity of medicine with the title of son of Ptah, one of the oldest of all Egyptian deities, and also a god of healing. With this new divine father, in place of his human father Kanofer, Imhotep becomes a member of the great triad of Memphis (Fig. x), which includes Ptah, Sekhmet and Imhotep.[1] The Egyptians

[1] Fig. x. The three figures here shown form the triad of Memphis : Ptah and Sekhmet are reproduced from statuettes at the British Museum. Imhotep is reproduced from the relief at Philae shown in the Frontispiece.

At an earlier period this triad comprised Ptah, Sekhmet and Nefertem, but Imhotep appears eventually to have usurped

appear to have found no difficulty in regarding Imhotep as the son of the god Ptah, while his mother was but an ordinary mortal. Such double filiation was possible since deities could borrow human attributes so as to enable a woman to bear them a son. Imhotep could thus be the son both of Ptah and of Kanofer.

His mother Khreduonkh and his wife Ronpenofret are in their turn raised to divine rank and are often found associated with him ; their names and titles clearly indicate their human origin.

the place of the latter. The members of Egyptian triads varied at different times and places. Thus Ptah, Nut and Imhotep sometimes form a triad, while in Thebes Ptah, Mut-Hathor and Imhotep formed a similar body. Cf. Roscher, *Lexicon*, ii (i), p. 123.

It is worthy of note that all the three members of the triad—Ptah, Sekhmet and Imhotep—were gods of healing. Ptah, one of the primeval deities, was famed for the marvellous cures effected at his temple at Memphis. Sekhmet was worshipped by priests, all of whom were magicians and some of whom were actually called after her.

Brugsch in his attempt to systematize the Egyptian Pantheon and to show that the numerous gods are mere personifications of the attributes of one omnipresent deity, associates Imhotep with Ptah, who is sometimes regarded as one of the forms of Shu. According to this view Imhotep becomes linked up with the great Ennead of nine gods (Shu, Tefnut, Keb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys, Horus, all nine having sprung from the sun-god Re). This view, however, is not accepted by modern Egyptologists. Cf. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, pp. 508, 526.

Khreduonkh is usually represented with a human head, adorned with the hood of a vulture and with double feathers. The Graeco-Egyptians called Imhotep Imouthes or Asklepios and gradually assimilated him with their own deity of medicine.[1]

It will be convenient to arrange what is known about Imhotep as the deity of medicine under the following headings :

A. The Worship of Imhotep.
B. The Temples of Imhotep.
C. Incubation.
D. The Medical Library at the Asklepieion.
E. Festivals in Honour of Imhotep.
F. Bas-Reliefs of Imhotep as Deity.
G. The Last Phase.

A. The Worship of Imhotep

The cult of Imhotep was probably first associated with his tomb, which, as already mentioned, was situated outside the city of Memphis on the edge of the desert to the west of the town. As time went on his cult spread throughout the land of Egypt and even into Nubia. More and more

[1] This is one of the numerous cases in which under the influence of Hellenism a fusion took place between Greek and Egyptian deities. It has even been suggested that the deification of Imhotep was due to Hellenistic influence. Cf. J. G. Milne, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi, p. 380 ; Bissing, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 1902, col. 2330.

widely was Imhotep accepted as the deity of medicine, and worshipped as on a level with the full gods of Egypt. Eventually he became one of the most popular deities, as we learn from the eulogistic appreciations that have been handed down to us.

Only a few of the epithets applied to this well-beloved deity of healing can be given here ; others will be found dotted about this volume.

(1) ' The Son of Ptah, beneficent god, begotten by the god of the South Wall, giver of life, who gives to those he loves, . . . who provides remedies for all diseases.'[1]

(2) ' Great One, Son of Ptah, . . . who cometh to him that calleth upon him wheresoever he may be, who giveth sons to the childless, . . . the image and likeness of Thoth the Wise.'[2]

(3) ' He who never sleeps day or night.'[3]

(4) ' The Great *Kherheb*, the first chief one of the Ibis, the son of Phtah, Anebefres, who listens to him who implores him, on the Western side of Thebes, who does good to its inhabitants, transmitting them life, giving strength and joy to its dwellers, and enriching the land.'[4]

(5) ' The divine falcon.'[5]

(6) ' He who giveth life to all men.'[6]

[1] D. Mallet, *Le Kasr El-Agoûz*, p. 38.
[2] Brugsch, *Thesaurus*, pp. 763, 922–3.
[3] Naville, *Deir el Bahari*, v, p. 12, Pl. cxlix.
[4] E. Naville, loc. cit., v, p. 11.
[5] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 18.
[6] Lepsius, loc. cit., Part iv, Pl. 15.

(7) ' Chief lector priest, scribe of the god, Imhotep the great One, Son of Ptah.'[1]

The popularity of Imhotep will cause no surprise, since he both healed the sick, protected from accident, gave children to sterile women and bestowed life on all men. In fact during the Hellenistic period the sage Imhotep, now deified, appears to have become the principal god worshipped at Memphis, and to have wellnigh rivalled Ptah.

No boon that suffering humanity craves for is greater than the relief from its aches and pains ; no boon evokes a more lively sense of gratitude in the worshipper, and this priceless gift was granted to the devotees who flocked to Imhotep's temples.

Breasted has thus summed up his career:

' The great wise man Imhotep was one of King Zoser's chief advisers. In priestly wisdom, in magic, in the formulation of wise proverbs, in medicine and architecture, this remarkable figure of Zoser's reign left so notable a reputation that his name was never forgotten. He was the patron spirit of the later scribes, to whom they regularly poured out a libation from the water jar of their writing-outfit before beginning their work. The people sang of his proverbs centuries later, and 2,500 years after his death he had become a god of medicine in whom the Greeks, who called him Imouthes, recognized their own Asklepios. A

[1] E. Naville, *Textes relatifs au Mythe d'Horus*, &c., 1870, p. 15, Pl. xi.

temple was erected to him near the Serapeum at Memphis, and at the present day every Museum possesses a bronze statuette or two of this apotheosized wise man, the proverb-maker, physician and architect of Zoser.' [1]

There is an interesting reference to the god Imhotep in the Ritual of Embalmment,[2] which gave directions for the anointing and bandaging of the mummy as it was being prepared for sepulture.[3] Each direction is followed by one or more invocations which are recited by the officiating priest and in which over thirty divinities are invoked, including the principal deities such as Osiris, Re, Ptah, Isis, Nephthys, as well as several less known ones amongst whom is Imhotep.

Every Egyptian died in the firm belief that in the course of his journey through the Underworld or Duat he would be provided with magic

[1] Breasted, *A History of Egypt*, 1911, p. 113.

[2] 'Le Rituel de l'Embaumement' is the name given by Maspero to a funerary text of the Graeco-Roman period, which is preserved in two papyri, one in the Cairo Museum (Pap. Bulaq., No. 3), the other in the Louvre (No. 5158). Cf. Maspero, *Mémoire sur quelques Papyrus du Louvre*, 1875, pp. 24, 80. Cf. also Elliot Smith and Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, pp. 45–50.

[3] After the statement that the deceased sees Amūn, the text goes on to say to him : ' Thy soul unites itself to Imhotep whilst thou art in the funeral valley, and thy heart rejoiceth because thou dost not go into the dwelling of Sebek, and because thou art like a son in the house of his father, and doest what pleaseth thee in the city of Thebes.'

spells which would enable him to make his way unhindered and obtain for him ample supplies of nourishment. Imhotep was one of those to whom were attributed such ' words of power ' which protected the dead from all kinds of enemies. Without such ' words of power ' poor persons who could not afford costly funerals or even purchase cheap amulets might be unable to continue their way through the later stages of the Underworld.[1]

On what grounds did Imhotep receive the very rare honour of being raised to the full rank of divinity ? Only a few other instances in which an ordinary mortal receives apotheosis are known in the whole of Egyptian history.[2] During his life King Zoser bestowed on him the highest office in the State, that of vizier ; but posterity conferred an even greater honour when it placed him among the deities of Egypt.

Maspero attributes this signal favour to the cumulative qualifications of architect, physician, sage and magician, but attributes the apotheosis mainly to his skill in magic. ' It is ', he says, ' in

[1] E. A. Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, i, pp. 261 and 523.

[2] This of course does not apply to the Pharaohs, since these were never looked upon as ordinary mortals. Sethe enumerates eight instances of the deification of individuals not of royal rank. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi, p. 650. Cf. also A. Wiedemann, ' Menschenvergötterung im alten Aegypten ', *Urquell*, vii.

virtue of his powers as a magician that Imhotep was deified.'[1]

There can be no question that in Egypt magic exerted an enormous influence in the life both of the individual and of the nation. It was invoked in all questions of life and death, of health and sickness, of love and hatred. But it was probably Imhotep's exceptional skill in the use of magic as a therapeutic agent combined with a full use of the rich *materia medica* at his disposal that led to his deification. He doubtless also possessed a commanding personality and the gift of inspiring confidence. As is well known, that physician cures most patients in whom most patients have faith. This axiom is of wide application, although preeminently true in psycho-neuroses. Physical as well as psychical therapeutics may well have been used in conjunction, and by combining their forces have raised Imhotep to a position of rare eminence. Doubtless after his death his reputation led to pilgrimages to his tomb, when incubation sleep in his adjoining temple was followed by many recoveries. Every successful cure would confirm the public confidence that the former magician-physician still

[1] G. Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie Égyptiennes*, 1916, viii, p. 134. Cf. also his article on the deification of Amenophis: 'How an Egyptian Statesman became a God', in *New Light on Ancient Egypt*, 1908, p. 189; Dawson, 'Amenophis the son of Hapu' in *Aegyptus*, vii (1926), pp. 113–38.

possessed superhuman powers. Fame would grow into veneration and eventually into true worship.

The deification of Imhotep proves that the Egyptians believed it possible for gods to be evolved out of mortal men. The motive underlying their elaborate funerary ritual was a belief in the physical survival of the dead, a belief that imposed on the living the obligation of keeping the mummy supplied with food and other necessaries of life, whether actual or magical. The supply of offerings deposited in the tomb was maintained and replenished by virtue of the ceremonies and magical incantations enacted during the funeral rites. The dead man, thus envisaged as still physically living, was dependent upon the piety of his survivors for protection against hunger, thirst and a host of other accidents that continually threatened him. He was living, but not immortal; he still had to face the possibility of that calamity which the texts call ' dying a second death '.

When the deceased person was thus supported by the piety of his descendants or by devotees, the moment of his dissolution could be indefinitely postponed. Even the gods, although less perishable than mortals, were subject to like infirmities as were the latter, e. g. to disease, senility and death, and needed liturgies and incantations as well as material sustenance if their continued existence

was to be assured. Thus the difference between a deity and an ordinary mortal was merely one of degree. Provided therefore that the descendants of a deceased person continued to support him by generous gifts and endowments in the same manner as was done in the case of a god, his continued existence would be assured. In Maspero's words, 'mortal men would have manufactured a new immortal'. The generous gifts provided by his devotees would at the same time enhance his prestige; this prestige would bring further gifts and thus increase his chances of attaining immortality. Such seems to have been the sequence of events which led to the apotheosis of one who had originally been an ordinary man of flesh and blood.

A similar process of gradual elevation to the rank of demigod and finally of full deity occurred in the case of another noted sage, viz. Amenophis, the son of Hapu, and vizier to King Amenophis III. The names of these two sages had lingered for many centuries in the popular imagination as national heroes so that in course of time they had come to be regarded as superhuman in nature and therefore entitled to divine honours. Probably in both cases their burial places became centres of pilgrimage, and, at any rate in the case of Imhotep, especially for the sick and suffering. This Amenophis was in many respects the counterpart of

Imhotep. What the latter was at the outset for Memphis, Amenophis was for the Thebans down to the latest times. His deification probably took place in the reign of King Ptolemy Euergetes II.[1]

Long before the Greek conquest of Egypt by Alexander, Imhotep had become generally recognized as the deity of medicine. The Greeks who called him Imouthes amalgamated him with their own Asklepios (Aesculapius), so that for some centuries the Egyptian deity of medicine may be described as in some measure a fusion of the ancient Imhotep and the much more modern Asklepios. Frequently, indeed, the identity of Imhotep is concealed under the name Asklepios.[2]

During the Ptolemaic period there seems to have been some relation between the worship of Imhotep and that of the sacred bull of Ptah named Apis.

[1] W. R. Dawson, ' Amenophis the son of Hapu ', *Aegyptus*, vii (1926), pp. 113–37.

[2] Imhotep was also at times assimilated with other deities that were associated with him, e. g. Harpocrates in Thebes, and Khnum in Elephantine. Pauly, *Real-Encyclopädie*, ix (ii), col. 1217.

Another interesting assimilation is that of Imhotep with Eshmun, the Phoenician god of healing. This assimilation is described in detail by N. Aimé-Giron, *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xxiii (1924), pp. 2–11. Cf. also Jayne, *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations*, 1925, p. 138.

At Debôt Imhotep was assimilated with the sacred ram of Mendes. Cf. *Bulletin*, &c., xiv (1918), p. 40.

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XII. IMHOTEP AS DEITY OF MEDICINE

Ammianus Marcellinus, referring to the time of Caesar Augustus (63 B. C.–A. D. 14), thus describes the association of Apis with the temple of Imhotep at Memphis. When the Apis bull had died, 'another is sought amid great public mourning; and if one can be found distinguished by all the required marks, he is led to Memphis, a city of great renown, and especially celebrated for the patronage of the god Aesculapius. And after he has been led into the city by one hundred priests and conducted into a chamber, he is looked upon as consecrated and is said to point out by evident means the signs of future events. Some also of those who come to him he repels by unfavourable signs; as it is reported he formally rejected Caesar Germanicus when he offered him food; thus portending what shortly happened.'[1] Doubtless Apis was taken into the inner sanctum of the temple of Asklepios (*sc.* Imhotep) so that he might be touched and thus consecrated by the statue of the deity.

The three figures xi, xii, xiii represent Imhotep as full deity of medicine.[2] Fig. xi shows the god

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus (tr. by C. D. Yonge), xxii, p. 14.

[2] According to Sethe (*Imhotep*, p. 1), the earliest inscribed monument that refers to Imhotep as a deity and that can be approximately dated appears to be the statue of one of his priests named Amasis, which is now in the Berlin Museum (No. 14765) and belongs to the Persian period, *ca.* 525 B. C. According to the inscription on this monument, the great-

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in the standing posture and carrying the *uas* sceptre in one hand and the *ankh* in the other ; it is taken from the temple of Ptah at Karnak.[1] Fig. xii shows him in a sitting posture and is taken from the temple of Medinet Habu.[2] Fig. xiii is a mutilated bronze statuette preserved at the British Museum,[3] and represents the god Imhotep carrying an *ankh* in his left hand, while the remains of the broken-off right arm is extended and looks as if it originally held a sceptre. This appears to be the only statuette of Imhotep with any of the attributes of deity. The figure differs in various details from the figures of the XXVIth Dynasty, e. g. in the style of the skirt and the coarseness of the legs, and probably belongs to the Roman period.

grandfather of the priest Amasis who was called Neferebre, had filled the office of third prophet of the house of Imhotep, the son of Ptah. As this Neferebre is mentioned in conjunction with the King Psammetich II, 594–589 B. C., and must therefore have been born at latest during his reign, Sethe concludes that the worship of Imhotep as a deity dates from the reign of King Amasis (570–525 B. C.). The elevation of Imhotep to divine rank was probably a gradual process and unaccompanied by any ceremonial. For the elaborate rites performed at the deification of Alexander the Great on the occasion of his visit to the temple of Jupiter Ammon cf. the article ' Comment Alexandre devint dieu en Égypte ', by Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie Égyptiennes*, 1912, vi, p. 263.

[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 15 d.

[2] Lepsius, loc. cit., Part iv, Pl. 32 c.

[3] Sixth Egyptian Room, No. 579.

The figures xi, xii of the god Imhotep follow the conventional lines of Egyptian deities with the addition of some special features. The image in human form wears the usual wig to which is attached the ceremonial beard worn by deities. The skirt is short, the belt supporting the lion's tail. Each figure carries the *uas* sceptre 𓋴 in the right hand and the *ankh* ☥ or sign of life in the left. The adornments include necklet and armlets, while the standing figure wears a pectoral.

The artist's delineations illustrate the peculiar characters of Egyptian drawings which date from early times and display a complete ignorance of perspective. While the head, legs and feet are drawn in profile, the eyes, chest and shoulders are seen frontwise; thus the body is at right angles to the head and legs. Where the figure is standing, one foot is placed exactly in front of the other so that a line drawn through the middle toe of one foot would pass through the same toe of the other foot. The attitude is awkward and even incongruous.

Figures of deities, as seen on the wall of a temple, were usually filled in with a reddish-brown wash, this being the conventional colour for the male sex, while females were tinted yellow.[1] The

[1] Two coloured figures, one of a male, the other of a female deity, are shown in E. Naville's *Deir el Bahari*, 1894, i, Pls. xiii, xiv.

face wears an expression of peaceful serenity, without indication of joy, sorrow or other emotion. No background, lights or shadows are introduced.

We now pass to the five views (Figs. xiv–xviii) in which Imhotep appears as one amongst a group of older deities. As the visitor approaches one of the magnificent Ptolemaic temples he passes first through the pylon, a huge portal flanked by two towers and frequently adorned by colossal statues of the Pharaoh who had erected the temple. He next enters a large court open to the sky and accessible to the public on days of ceremony; behind this lies a hall, sometimes called the hypostyle hall, covered by a flat roof supported by pillars. Next comes the vestibule, then the adytum, and last of all the sanctuary or Holy of Holies, without a single window to illuminate its profound gloom and in which abode the statue of the god. It is on the walls of these various chambers that are frequently to be seen series of brilliantly coloured bas-reliefs round which run inscriptions usually inlaid with coloured pastes. In these reliefs are frequently represented either famous deeds of the Pharaoh who built the temple or else some incidents of the sacred ritual, or lastly a row of deities whom the Pharaoh specially wished to honour.

Amongst these deities Imhotep often appears, and it is interesting to note that he is grouped

amongst some of the oldest and greatest deities such as Thoth, Ptah, Maēt, Osiris, Isis, Harpocrates and many others.

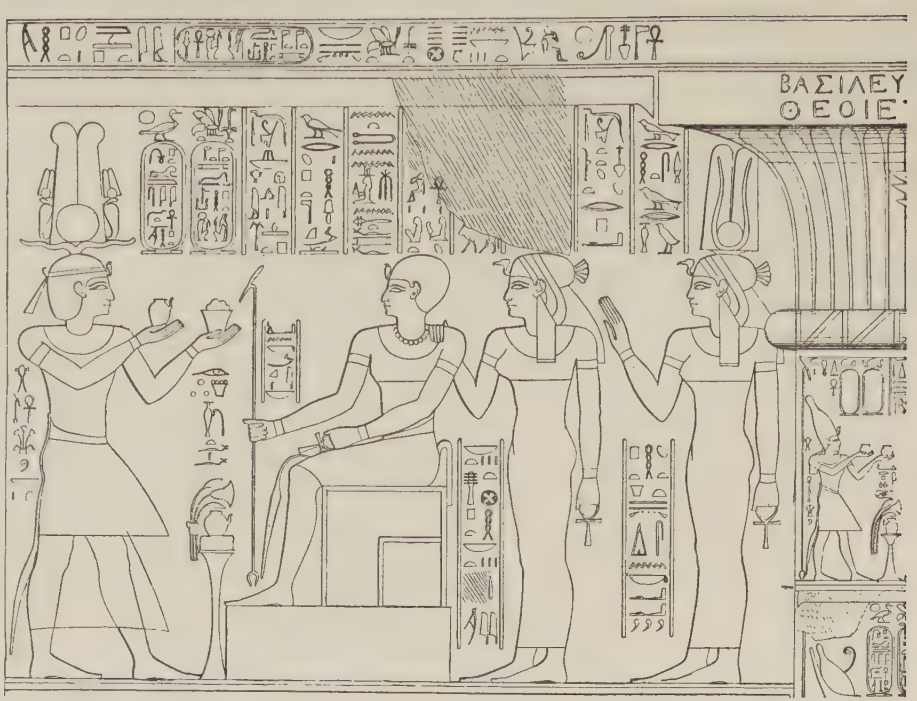
In Figure xiv, taken from Imhotep's temple at Philae, may be seen four figures representing on the left King Ptolemy V Epiphanes, holding in each hand a vessel which he is presenting to the three deities in front of him. Nearest to the king is seated Imhotep carrying the sceptre and the *ankh* ☥, the symbol of life. The goddess next to Imhotep is probably his mother the deified Khreduonkh and behind her his wife the deified Ronpe-nofret.[1]

Figure xv, taken from the temple of Ptah at Karnak, shows King Ptolemy XI bringing gifts to Ptah who is holding a sceptre, composed of 𓋹 *wsr*, 'influence', ☥ *ankh*, 'life', and 𓊽 *ded*, 'stability', to his consort Hathor provided with horns and a disk on her head, and to Imhotep the last figure on the right.[2]

Figure xvi, taken from the temple of Medinet Habu, shows the figures of Thoth, Imhotep and Amenophis the son of Hapu, all being worshipped by Ptolemy IX (whose figure, however, does not appear in the plate). Thoth is represented with the head of an ibis and an elaborate head-dress, having amongst other ornaments two horns, two uraei each carrying a disk and other objects. In

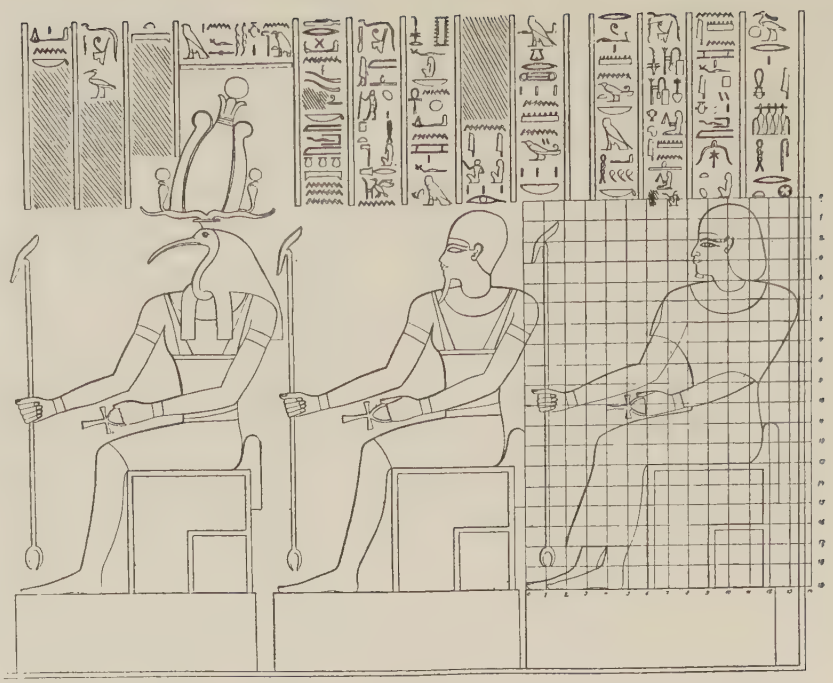
[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 18.

[2] Lepsius, loc. cit., Pl. 15 d.



XIV. KING PTOLEMY V WORSHIPPING IMHOTEP AND OTHER DEITIES

XV. KING PTOLEMY XI WORSHIPPING PTAH, HATHOR AND IMHOTEP



XVI. IMHOTEP SEATED BETWEEN THOTH AND AMENOPHIS SON OF HAPU

his right hand he holds a sceptre while in his left hand is the *ankh* ☥. Behind Thoth is seated Imhotep and still farther back Amenophis the son of Hapu. This Amenophis was originally a vizier and scribe who was afterwards deified. In many respects he is the counterpart of Imhotep and appears frequently near him in bas-reliefs.[1]

Figure xvii, taken from the temple at Philae, represents the Emperor Tiberius making an offering of incense to Imhotep. The Emperor is wearing the white crown of the Pharaohs with horns and the short skirt, while Imhotep carries the usual insignia of deity.[2]

Figure xviii, the most elaborate of all the figures, is taken from the Ptolemaic Chamber which was added *ca.* 140 B. C. by Ptolemy IX Euergetes to the splendid temple which Queen Hatshepsowet, the sister and wife of Tuthmosis III (1479–1447 B. C.), had erected at the beginning of the New Empire as her funerary shrine. Our figure only represents about half of a fine mural relief which is given *in extenso* and described in Naville's monumental work on the temple.[3]

[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 32 c. An admirable account of this Amenophis the son of Hapu has been published by W. R. Dawson, *Aegyptus*, vii (1926), pp. 113–38.

[2] Lepsius, loc. cit., Part iv, Pl. 75 a.

[3] E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el Bahari*, Part v, p. 11, Pls. cxlviii–cl.

XVII. IMHOTEP BEING WORSHIPPED BY THE EMPEROR TIBERIUS

The following deities may be seen in order. First comes Imhotep, who is stretching out his sceptre towards a complicated figure consisting of a surrounded by stars and representing the goddess of Thebes. But the Thebes must be a celestial one, since the stars are said to be its inhabitants.

Behind Imhotep stands a goddess somewhat resembling Hathor. Naville suggests that she is Imhotep's mother who has also been deified. She is described as 'the divine mother, the good nurse Khreduonkh, who appears in the Mendesian nome, and who gives birth to her son on earth at Ankhtowē on the sixteenth day of Epiphi'. The following words are put into her mouth: 'I give thee life, I join to it health; my protective power, Imhotep, is guarding thee.'

Next to Khreduonkh is seen another goddess who may be Imhotep's wife, 'the divine sister Neferrenput (Ronpe-nofret), the lady of the lock, the beloved lady who gives joy to the heart of her brother, and who exalts his person by what she has done'. If she is Imhotep's wife, she, like her husband, has been ranked among the divinities.

Raised on a platform will be noticed four more figures consisting of two goddesses, a god and then one more goddess. First comes the goddess Neith Ament wearing the head-dress of Lower Egypt. Behind her and enclosed in a shrine stands

XVIII. IMHOTEP AMONGST

OUP OF OTHER DEITIES

the goddess Apet, wearing two feathers and a disk, and still farther back her son Hor Hiken, a rather uncommon form of Horus.

The last goddess, also enclosed in a shrine and with the head of a vulture, is Hikent.

Imhotep is given numerous titles on the wall bearing the bas-relief. Amongst them are 'chief ritualist', 'the first chief one of the ibis', 'the son of Ptah who listens to him who implores him, on the Western side of Thebes', 'who does good to its inhabitants, transmitting them life, giving strength to its dwellers and joy, and enriching the land'.

Another inscription at the end of the wall states that 'millions and hundreds of thousands call on him', and that he never sleeps either by day or by night. Hence he is called 'the beneficent god'. An interesting title given him is *snw*, apparently a late writing of *sinw*, 'physician'.

B. The Temples of Imhotep

Several temples were built in honour of Imhotep after his apotheosis. The principal one was at Memphis and became a famous hospital and school of magic and medicine.[1] This temple, of which

[1] Other medical schools existed at Thebes, Sais and On (Heliopolis). The head priest of Sais bore the title 'greatest of the physicians'.

unhappily no traces have survived,[1] was situated near to the spot where the great magician-physician had been laid to rest and was called by the Greeks the Asklepieion, *τὸ πρὸς Μέμφιν μέγα Ἀσκληπιεῖον*.[2] It doubtless consisted of a number of halls and annexes, some of which would be devoted to the worship of the deity Imhotep. Others served for clinical purposes and for the instruction of budding magician-physicians, yet others for the preparation and preservation of the *materia medica* which we know from the Ebers and other medical papyri was extraordinarily rich. At least one

[1] It seems strange that Memphis, one of the most populous capitals of antiquity, with an important group of temples, should have undergone such extensive destruction that even the site of the city remained unknown for many centuries. To-day little remains but shapeless ruins and rubbish heaps among the palm trees and fields. Amongst the most famous of its temples were those of Ptah (Hephaistos), the patron-god of the city, of Anubis, of Imhotep, of Serapis, of Apis and of Aphrodite. These temples, including that of Imhotep, were largely destroyed in consequence of the edict of Theodosius (A. D. 380); the other portions of the city gradually fell into ruins mainly after the twelfth century. Flinders Petrie commenced the excavation of Memphis in 1907, and states that one temple alone, that of Ptah, measured one-third of a mile in length and quarter of a mile in breadth.

[2] It is interesting to compare the Asklepieion at Memphis with those at Athens and Epidauros. Cf. P. Girard, *L'Asclépieion d'Athènes*, 1882; R. Caton, *The Temples and Ritual of Asklepios at Epidauros and Athens*, 1900.

annexe was used for incubation or for the accommodation of patients and suppliants. The various grades of priests and the many other officials would also require provision made for them.

There can be little doubt that this temple possessed large endowments as did other important Egyptian temples. Some of its endowments may even have come down from ancient times, when Imhotep was only a demigod, possibly even from the days of Mycerinus.[1] There would also be sacred utensils used in divine worship, valuable presents and votive offerings made by patients who had been cured of their maladies. The library will be described in section D.

Close to the Asklepieion was the vast Serapieion, consisting of a group of temples in which Serapis

[1] In the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, xi (1915), pp. 222, 231, we read of a temple of Imhotep as existing at the time of King Mycerinus. This would doubtless be a shrine near to Imhotep's tomb at which the demigod was worshipped. The same King is said to have presented money in abundance to the tomb of Imhotep, here called Asklepios, the son of Hephaistos (Vulcan). The Papyrus further states that King Nectanebo II many years later enriched Imhotep (Aesculapius) with 330 arurae more of corn-land (cf. p. 47).

The great Harris Papyrus now in the British Museum, and dating from the time of Ramesses IV (1167–1161 B. C.) gives an excellent account of the vast endowments possessed by Egyptian temples at that period. Cf. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 1894, p. 299.

and various other deities were honoured. The worship of Imhotep was to some extent connected with that of Serapis, so much so that stone altars sacred to Imhotep were actually set up in the Serapieion, on which daily libations were offered.[1]

Another goddess of healing, the Syrian Astarte, appears also to have been worshipped at the Asklepieion. Thus we read of 'a gift of oil being made for the lamp of the sanctuary of the god Imhotep and of the great goddess Astarte'.[2] Evidently worship in a temple dedicated to a special god did not exclude the concurrent worship of other deities.

Many interesting details have survived of the allowances made by the State to the priests who were associated with the Egyptian temples during the second century B. C.[3] These allowances, known as συντάξεις σιτικαί, appear to have consisted of wine, milk, oil and bread; the two forms of oil

[1] S. Birch, *Archaeologia*, xxxix (1863), p. 315; W. Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten*, i, p. 117. For further details on the Asklepieion and Serapieion cf. Brunet de Presle, *Mémoires sur le Sérapéum de Memphis*.

[2] Revillout, *Revue Égyptologique*, ii, p. 79; cf. also *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xxiii (1924), p. 7.

[3] W. Otto, *Priester und Tempel im Hellenistischen Ägypten*, i, pp. 117, 373.

were sesame and kiki (i. e. castor) oil,[1] while the loaves were made of spelt, i. e. a form of wheat (*Triticum spelta*).

At the Asklepieion at Memphis, in addition to the ordinary priests, a form of lower priesthood was in existence, represented by the famous twin-sisters (αἱ δίδυμαι). These twin-sisters (ἱερόδουλοι), so called because their office could only be filled by two women who were actually twins, received daily for their services at the Asklepieion four loaves a day, called cyllêstis (κύλλαστις).[2]

One duty of the twin-sisters was to attend to the daily libations to Imhotep which were offered in the Serapieion.[3] During the reign of Ptolemy VII (*ca.* 163 B. C.) these twin-sisters, known by the names Taues and Taous, were defrauded of their allowances, when the king took up their case and saw justice done.

[1] This was derived from the *Ricinus communis*, a common plant in Egypt. Herodotus, ii. 94. Cf. also W. R. Dawson for the uses of the plant in antiquity, *American Druggist*, 1926, May.

[2] Herodotus, ii. 77.

[3] In the Cairo Museum is preserved a θησαυρός or money-box, derived from the temple of Asklepios and Hygieia at Ptolemais, and intended to receive donations from worshippers. Such money-boxes were commonly used in Egyptian temples of the Graeco-Roman period; the Cairo specimen is surmounted by a serpent's head, doubtless as a symbol of the important part played by serpents in the ritual of Asklepios. *Z. f. Ägyptische Sprache*, xl (1902–3), p. 140.

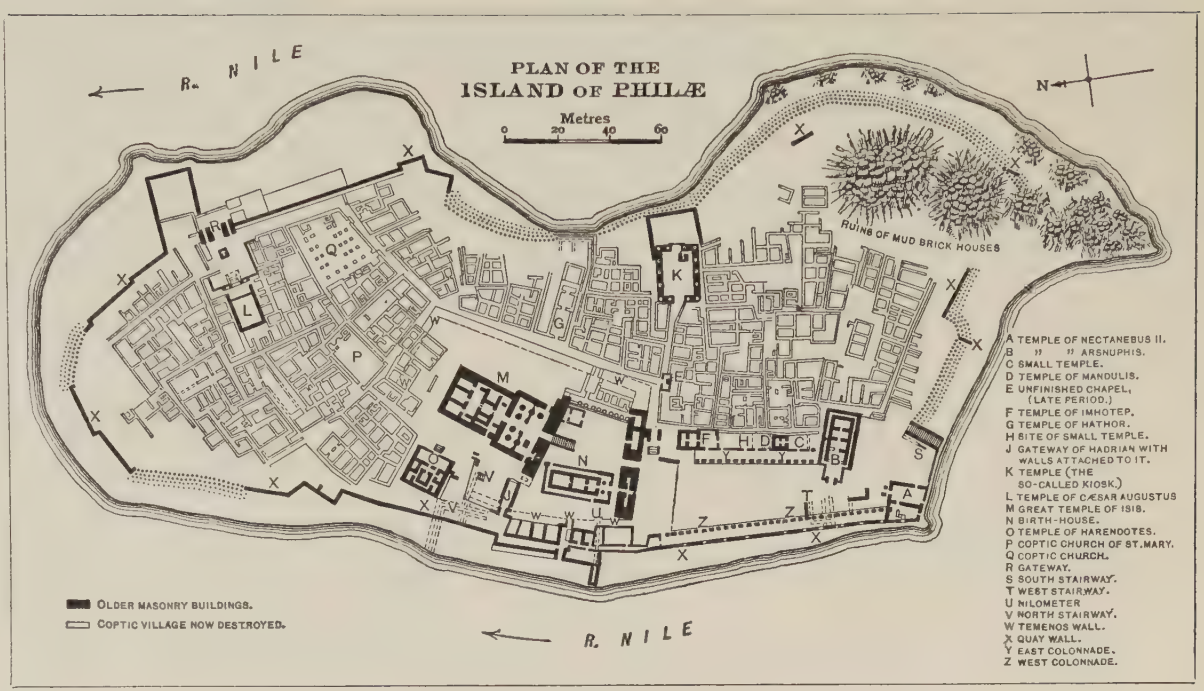
Although we know little of the patients treated at the Asklepieion, apart from the cases benefited by incubation, yet we may be sure that countless numbers of sick, maimed and blind persons resorted to that famous temple of healing, and returned to their simple mud hovels nestling under the date palms or amongst the millet fields, full of gratitude to the beloved deity Imhotep for renewed health and strength. They had turned their eyes and hearts towards their god and had received a rich reward.

Another temple of Imhotep, also called the Asklepieion, existed at Philae (Figs. xix–xxiii), and of this, an interesting specimen of Egyptian architecture, a large portion has survived to this day, in spite of its immersion in a vast reservoir.[1] Some of the halls, which during many centuries were used for clinical purposes and for incubation, are extant.[2]

It is pleasant to think that Imhotep was wor-

[1] Fig. xix shows a Plan of the Island of Philae and the position of Imhotep's temple on the island. The temple lies to the south of the much larger temple of Isis which was the principal sanctuary on the island and dedicated to Isis and her son Harpocrates (Horus).

[2] Figs. xx–xxiii show the plan and three views of Imhotep's temple. In Fig. xx is seen the ground-plan ; in Fig. xxi the front of the temple ; in Fig. xxii the Western wall and the entrance to the courtyard ; in Fig. xxiv the Eastern wall of the courtyard. Cf. R. Caton, The Harveian Oration, 1904.



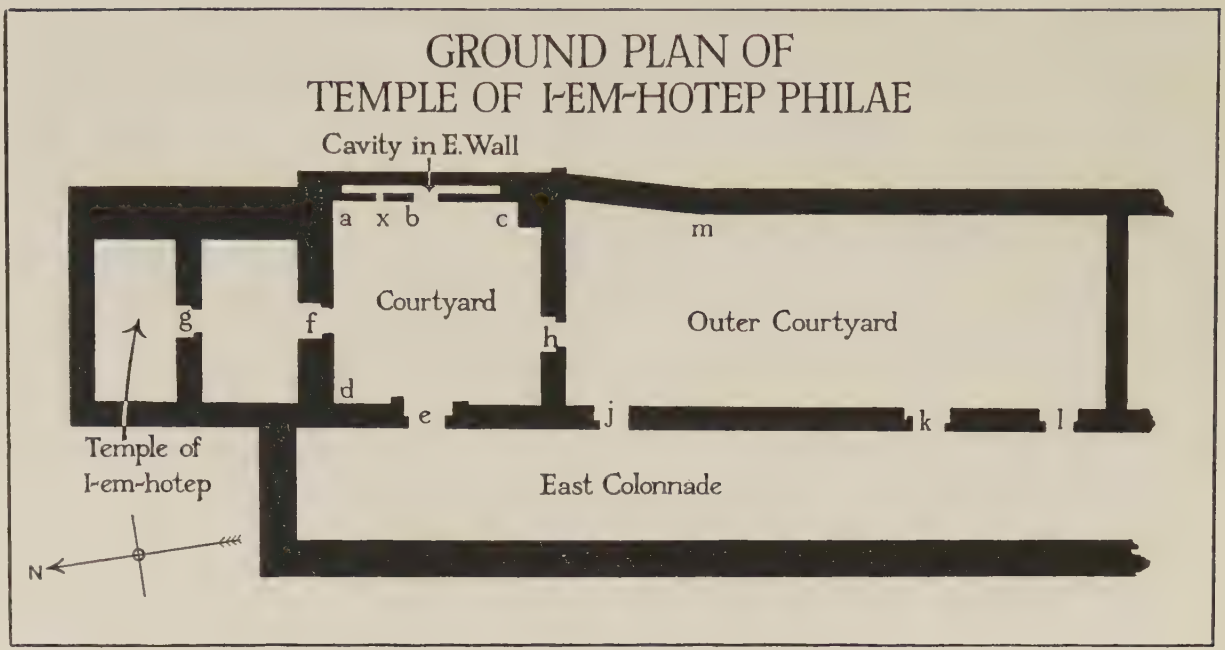
XIX. THE ISLAND OF PHILAE

shipped in this famous island, sometimes called the ' Holy Island ', so rich in its associations with religion, with history, with architecture and painting. Kings, conquerors, priests and travellers without number have been enchanted with its beauty, and have left records of their visits, of their acts of adoration, of their offerings to the deities whose temples still adorn this hallowed spot. On the other hand this island has been visited by many pathetic figures, some carried on stretchers, some hobbling on crutches, as well as by nursing mothers cuddling their sick babies, one and all votaries of the beloved Imhotep, the far-famed god of medicine.

This temple [1] was built by Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 283–245 B. C., the hieroglyphic inscriptions being those of Ptolemy IV Philopator, 221–203 B. C., one of which runs as follows :

' Great One, Son of Ptah, the creative god, made by Thenen, begotten by him and beloved by him, the god of divine forms in the temples, who giveth

[1] An admirable view of this temple from the south, showing several figures of the deity Imhotep, is given by Sir H. G. Lyons in his *Report on the Island and Temples of Philae*, Pl. x. Cf. also Mahaffy, *History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty*, p. 184. As a rule when the Ptolemies erected a temple in honour of their Egyptian gods, its style and ornamentation were purely Egyptian. The Greek inscription at Philae supplies an interesting example of the identification of Imhotep with Asklepios.



XX. THE TEMPLE OF IMHOTEP ISLAND OF PHILAE

GROUND PLAN

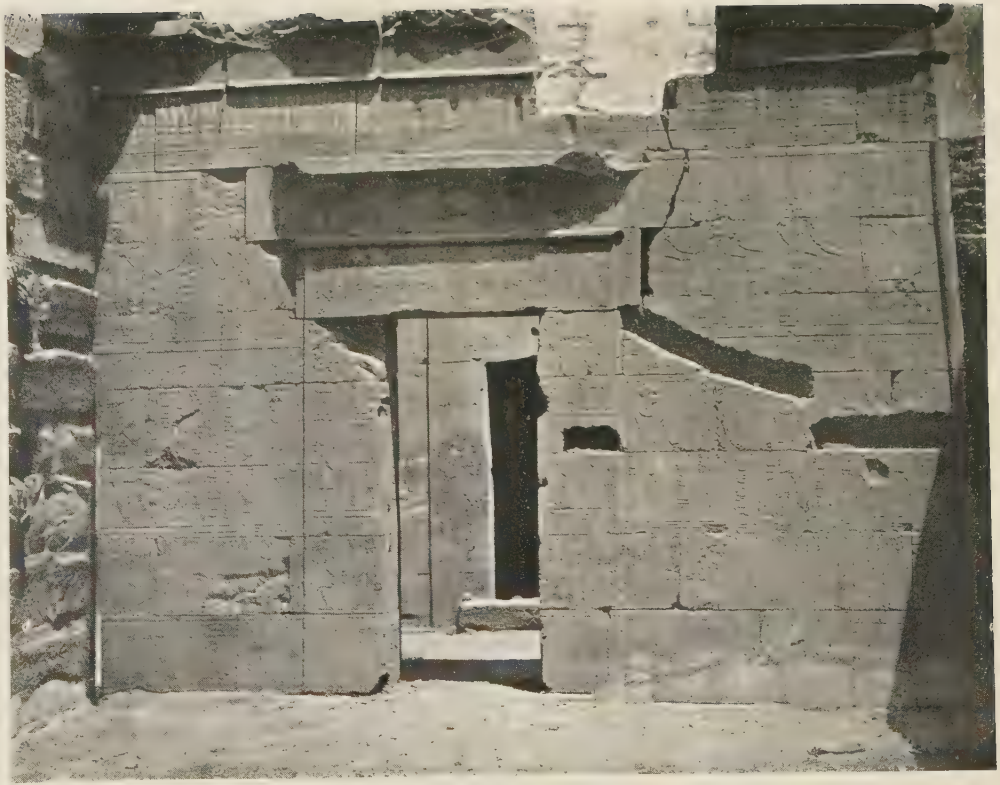
life to all men, the mighty one of wonders, the maker of all times (?), who cometh unto him that calleth upon him, wheresoever he may be, who giveth sons to the childless, the chief Kher-heb, the image and likeness of Thoth the Wise.'[1]

The following Greek inscription, placed over the door and dedicating the temple to the Greek god Asklepios (i. e. Imhotep), was placed there by command of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203–181 B.C.)[2]: *Βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος καὶ Βασίλισσα Κλεοπάτρα θεοὶ Ἐπιφανεῖς καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ υἱὸς Ἀσκληπιῷ*, which may be rendered thus: 'King Ptolemy and the Queen Cleopatra, Gods Epiphanes, and Ptolemy the son to Asklepios.'[3] The remainder of the

[1] Brugsch, *Thesaurus*, pp. 763, 922–3; *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 527. After his deification Imhotep is sometimes designated as Ibis, i. e. the sacred bird of Thoth. Sages who were raised to the status of divinity were in some measure regarded as incarnations of that god. K. Sethe, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi, pp. 650–1.

[2] This Greek inscription is also of historic interest since it led Mr. Henry Salt, the British Consul-General, to the discovery of Imhotep's temple at Philae and thus to the recognition of the Egyptian deity of Medicine. Mr. Salt announced his discovery in a letter dated Cairo, April 26, 1822. 'At Philoe (*sic*) . . . I found and excavated the front of a small temple with an inscription upon it in Greek, which proves that it was dedicated by Ptolemeus Epiphanus to Esculapius.' J. J. Halls, *Life and Correspondence of Henry Salt*, 1834, ii, p. 186.

[3] Letronne, *Recueil des Inscriptions gr. et lat. de l'Égypte*, i,



XXI. THE TEMPLE OF IMHOTEP, ISLAND OF PHILAE

FRONT VIEW

inscription is interesting, although various gaps make much of the meaning unintelligible :

' Great Imhotep, Son of Ptah, who fliest up to heaven like a sparrow-hawk, who goest as a worthy soul, who comest as a divine falcon in the company of the restless ? stars, who receives the . . . in the barque of the sun, in company of the everlasting ? stars, whose countenance is made radiant, as thou passest along. The serpent . . . illuminates thee and opens the doors as thou passest through the *ỉmḥ-t* hall (? of the Duat) ; Osiris rejoices as thou enterest . . . as thou comest out of the great palace *ht-ꜥꜣt*, thou receivest . . . before him (Osiris) every day like Horus.'[1]

The best guide to the temple of Imhotep is the long East Colonnade leading from the temple of Arsnuphis to the Great Pylon, a colonnade consisting of seventeen columns. Through this wall are cut seven doorways, the first five of which lead to the court in which stands the ruined chapel of Mandulis, a Nubian deity. The sixth leads to the small temple of Imhotep.[2] As the visitor passes through this doorway he finds himself in a little court, on the north side of which is the

pp. 7–10. Letronne suggests that the dedication of the temple took place between 188 and 186 B.C.

[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 18. The falcon was the emblem of the deity. Cf. also Sethe, *Imhotep*, p. 6.

[2] A good plan of these buildings will be found in Baedeker's *Egypt*, 1914, p. 365.

entrance to the temple. There are figures of Imhotep and other deities on both sides of the entrance, which Weigall thus describes :

' On the left side is seen King Ptolemy V Epiphanes before Imhotep. On the right side he is shown before Khnum, Satis and Anukis, and before Unnefer, Isis and Imhotep. Around the doorway are small panels of reliefs showing Osiris, Isis, Khnum, Hathor, Ptah, Thoth and Imhotep being adored by the King. On either side of the jambs of the door the King's titles are inscribed, and reference is made to Isis, while he is said to be beloved of Imhotep and Ptah.'[1]

The iconoclasm of later ages has left few architectural details of this little temple which we may assume was more or less on the usual plan of Ptolemaic edifices. There was probably an open court or hall flanked by pylons, in which stood the great altar of the deity and which was accessible to worshippers. This altar would doubtless be decked with offerings consisting of fruit, flowers, loaves of bread, incense and votive offerings presented by grateful patients. The image of the god Imhotep would be kept in the dark sanctuary behind the hall, this Holy of Holies being reserved for priests and devotees who had purified them-

[1] A. E. Weigall, *Antiquities of Lower Nubia*, 1907, p. 42. There are also references to Imhotep and the deities coupled with him on pp. 40, 43, and 50. Cf. also Weigall's *Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, 1913, p. 475.

XXII. THE TEMPLE OF

The Entrance to the Temple of Imhotep is seen on the righ
The western wall of the Temple (with mediev

TEP, ISLAND OF PHILAE

en the first and second columns of the Eastern Colonnade
c doorway) occupies the centre of the picture

selves. Various annexes would be reserved for incubation and the use of the inferior priesthood, but their identification is no longer possible.

No details have survived of the endowments attached to the temple of Imhotep at Philae, but doubtless this, like other sacred edifices, had landed property. As a rule extensive estates were attached to Egyptian temples and held as common property by the ' colleges ' of priests who directed the worship of each deity. The piety and gratitude of pilgrims, whether Pharaoh on the throne or humble fellahin, who had received benefit after incubation in the temple precincts, would naturally evoke a sense of gratitude and result in valuable gifts to the beneficent god who had released from suffering and granted renewed health.

In view of the assimilation of Greek and Egyptian deities in Ptolemaic times, we may also associate Imhotep with the temple of Asklepios and Hygieia at Ptolemais Hermiu, also known as Menshiah (el Menchah), and situated about 80 miles above Assiut on the left bank of the Nile.[1] This temple was built by Ptolemy Soter I and restored during the reign of Trajan. Doubtless Imhotep was here assimilated with Asklepios as was so often done under the Ptolemies. This town of Ptolemais Hermiu had a Hellenic constitution, so that Greek

[1] G. Plaumann, *Ptolemais in Oberägypten*, 1910, p. 92.

influence was probably more dominant than elsewhere, as is shown by the inclusion of Hygieia in the name of the temple. But generally speaking the worship of Greek gods in Egypt was nominal and there would be a strong tendency to the assimilation of Imhotep.[1]

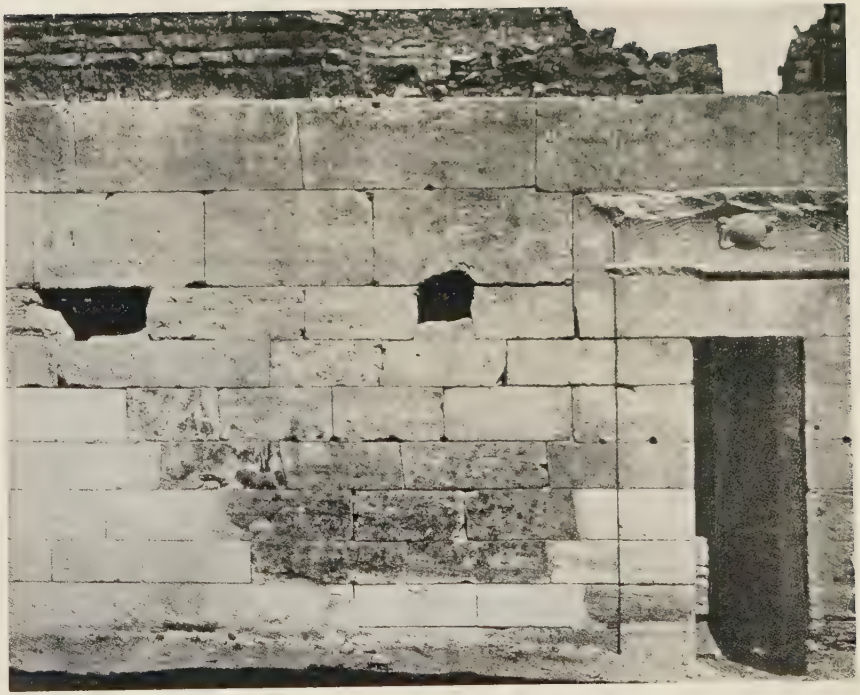
If we may trust the *Hermetica* there was also a temple dedicated to Imhotep in 'the Libyan mountains near the shore of crocodiles'.[2] This description can only apply to the Fayûm and probably to Crocodilopolis, a town now called Arsinoe, where according to an ancient tradition Imhotep was buried. Unhappily no further details of this temple are available.

Apart from the temples specially dedicated to Imhotep, this deity was also worshipped in various other temples. One of these was the temple of his divine father Ptah at Thebes.[3] This temple was

[1] On the other hand an invocation to Asklepios and Hygieia on the occasion of the restoration of the temple at Ptolemais is purely Greek in tone. Cf. J. G. Milne, *A History of Egypt under Roman Rule*, 1924, p. 199.

[2] W. Scott, *Hermetica*, i, pp. 358–9; iii, pp. 221, 223–4.

[3] Brugsch (*Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, 1890, p. 527) states that there were special shrines or sanctuaries at Karnak dedicated to Imhotep. These, however, were probably not really temples of Imhotep but rather halls in the temple of Ptah at Karnak, where there were mural bas-reliefs of Imhotep (Section F). Cf. also Baedeker's *Egypt*, 1914, p. 277; *Plan of Karnak*, p. 264.



XXIII. THE TEMPLE OF IMHOTEP, ISLAND OF PHILAE

EASTERN WALL OF COURTYARD

built by Tuthmosis III and restored by several of the Ptolemies. Here were worshipped Ptah, his wife Sekhmet, their son Imhotep, Amenophis the son of Hapu and other deities.

Another important temple (Fig. xxiv) was the superb building built by Queen Hatshepsowet at Zeseret in Western Thebes, the modern Deir el-Bahari ('monastery of the north', so called by modern Egyptians from the Coptic Monastery, which formerly stood on the site). The main body of the temple was erected early in the XVIIIth Dynasty, 1545–1350 B.C., and was dedicated to Amūn. The building also contains chapels dedicated to Anubis, the god of embalming, and Hathor, the goddess of the West, but the main purpose of the building was to serve as the mortuary temple of the Queen, whose actual burial-place was discovered in the Valley of the Kings in 1903. A later addition, known as the Ptolemaic chamber, was erected by Ptolemy IX, and this was dedicated, not to the gods who were associated with the older parts of the temple, but to two deified men—Imhotep and Amenophis son of Hapu, one wall of the chamber being ascribed to each.[1] Indeed the upper terrace of this temple in course of time became a sanatorium resorted to by invalids who

[1] A. E. Weigall gives a plan of the temple showing the two walls. *Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, pp. 266, 275.

scribbled or painted numerous invocations to the two deities Imhotep and Amenophis the son of Hapu on the walls of the temple.[1]

Amongst common *graffiti* or ex voto inscriptions are the following : ' the homage of M. to the lord god Asklepios ' ; ' N. came to worship the great god Asclepios'—usually with the addition of the name Amenothes, and often with that of Hygieia, to Asklepios ; sometimes the writer associated his wife, his family or his friends in his act of worship.

A *graffito* quoted by Milne is of special interest, as it has been twice improved upon by later commentators. The first entry ran ' Eugraphios offers his homage before the lord god Asklepios and Amenothes and Hygieia : be mindful of us and grant us healing ' ; at the end of this, one Pesubis, presumably a Gnostic who desired some credit to be ascribed to the weird spirits which he worshipped, wrote ' with the help of Cherstapane and Phritob ' ; finally a Christian, grieved to find so many deities evoked, added his correction above the errors of previous centuries : ' It is the One God who helps you.'

[1] J. G. Milne, *J. of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1914, i, p. 96; *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vi, p. 382. Cf. also C. R. Piers, *J. of Hellenic Studies*, 1899, xix, p. 13. Amenothes is a Greek variant of the more frequent Amenophis.

XXIV. THE TEMPLE OF DEIR EL-BAHARI

Not far from Deir el-Bahari are several other temples in which Imhotep appears in mural reliefs. Amongst them is the Ptolemaic temple known at the present day as the Kasr el-Agouz, which was erected by Euergetes II to the god Thoth. Here may be seen the King sacrificing to Thoth, Imhotep and the deified sage Amenophis the son of Hapu, although some of the reliefs are unfinished. This temple stands SW. of the Colossi of Memnon.[1]

Imhotep and Amenophis were also jointly worshipped in the temple of Medinet Habu, lying directly W. of the Colossi. Here again the two famous sages of Egypt who had both been accorded divine honours were worshipped in the same shrine.[2]

The same applies to the temple of Deir el-Medineh, which lies NW. of the Colossi.[3] This temple may have been the grave of Amenophis and was converted by Ptolemy IV into a shrine to the gods of the dead. In it both Amenophis and Imhotep were worshipped in company with the full gods of Egypt.

The magnificent temple of Edfu must probably be added to those in which Imhotep was honoured,

[1] Baedeker's *Egypt*, 1914, p. 330, Plan, p. 280. The temple is fully described by D. Mallet, *Le Kasr el-Agoûz*.

[2] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 32 c.

[3] *Description de l'Égypte* (*Antiquités*), ii, Pls. 34–7.

as it contains a mural relief which will be described in Section F.

There were also various temples in Nubia where Imhotep was held in high honour and perhaps even worshipped. Amongst these are the temples at Debôt,[1] Dakkah [2] and Kalabshah.[3] The number of these temples and their diffusion in Egypt and Nubia shows how far through those countries the fame of the god Imhotep had spread.

Apart from these public temples there appear to have been in Ptolemaic times many small shrines or altars which individuals erected in their own homes in honour of their tutelary deity Imhotep and in the hope of securing his protection against all sorts of misfortunes. In other cases such shrines were hired out by their owners in return for money payments contributed by sick persons or such as needed some oracular guidance in a difficulty. Such shrines were dedicated both to Isis and Imhotep (*sc.* Asklepios), the latter, however, being the principal god of healing.[4]

[1] Gunther Röder, *Debod bis Bab Kalabchah*, Cairo, 1911, i, pp. 47, 52, 53 ; ii, Pls. 12, 13, 44.

[2] *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xiv (1918), p. 40.

[3] H. Gauthier, *Le Temple de Kalabchah*, 1911, p. 88 and Pl. xxvii b.

[4] W. Schubart, *Ägypten von Alexander dem Grossen bis auf Mohammed*, 1922, p. 300.

C. Incubation

The subject of incubation at the shrine of the demigod Imhotep has been dealt with in some detail in Chapter III, so that it is unnecessary to repeat the general principles on which incubation was based, or the objects with which it was practised. The greater the reputation of the deity of healing, the more the devotee was assured of complete restoration to health, and the more likely was such restoration to result. These cures, through the operation of a *circulus virtuosus*, would in turn raise his reputation yet higher than before with an increased probability of recovery.[1]

After his apotheosis the reputation of Imhotep as a god of healing would doubtless be largely enhanced ; indeed we know that it spread to the remote districts of Egypt and Nubia. The priests attached to his temples would become adepts in recounting the miraculous events that had occurred within the sacred precincts and in stirring the imagination of prospective patients. From being a local or regional demigod of healing Imhotep now became a national god of medicine whose

[1] Incubation dreams were also used for propaganda, devotees being urged to build further temples and spread the cult of the deity. Cf. W. Schubart, *Ägypten von Alexander dem Grossen bis auf Mohammed*, p. 314.

fame was blazoned abroad by every patient who had derived benefit from his or her temple sleep and the associated divine apparition and cure.

An interesting story has survived which illustrates the practice of incubation at Imhotep's temples. We shall follow here the popular version as presented by Maspero,[1] while readers wishing for a more exact translation are referred to F. Ll. Griffith's full and learned edition of the papyrus.[2]

The story relates to a man named Satmi Khamuas, the son of the Pharaoh Usermares, who had no man-child by his wife Mahîtuaskhît; this troubled him greatly in his heart, and his wife Mahîtuaskhît was greatly afflicted with him. One day, when Satmi was more depressed than usual, his wife Mahîtuaskhît went to the temple of Imhotep, son of Ptah, and uttered this prayer before him, saying: 'Turn thy face towards me, my lord Imhotep, son of Ptah; it is thou who dost

[1] G. Maspero, *Popular Stories of Ancient Egypt*, 1915, pp. 144 ff.

[2] F. Ll. Griffith, *Stories of the High Priests of Memphis*, 1900, pp. 42, 143. Griffith prefers 'Setme' to 'Satmi', 'Meh-wesekht' to 'Mahîtuaskhît', and 'Si-osiri' to 'Senosiris'.

The original story of Satmi Khamuas and his son Senosiris is given in Papyrus DCIV of the British Museum. This story is written in demotic on the *verso* of a document which contains official writings in Greek, and is dated in the 7th year of Claudius Caesar, i.e. A.D. 46–7.

XXV. AMULET OF IMHOTEP

work miracles, and who art beneficent in all thy deeds; it is thou who givest a son to her who has none. Listen to my lamentation and give me conception of a man-child.'

That same night Mahîtuaskhît, the wife of Satmi, slept in the temple and dreamed a dream in which one spake with her, 'Art thou not Mahîtuaskhît, the wife of Satmi, who dost sleep in the temple to receive a remedy for thy sterility from the hands of the god?[1] When to-morrow morning comes, go to the bath-room of Satmi thy husband, and thou wilt find a root of colocasia that is growing there. The colocasia that thou meetest with thou shalt gather with its leaves; thou shalt make of it a remedy that thou shalt give to thy husband, then thou shalt lie by his side, and thou shalt conceive by him the same night.'

When Mahîtuaskhît awoke from her dream after seeing the vision, she at once carried out the instructions given her in her dream; then she lay by the side of Satmi, her husband, and conceived by him. When the time came and all the signs of pregnancy appeared, Satmi announced the news to the Pharaoh, for his heart rejoiced greatly thereat. He bound an amulet on his wife (Figs. xxv, xxvi),[2]

[1] This identification of a suppliant by the deity is characteristic of Egyptian incubation.

[2] This is an interesting reference to the use of an amulet,

and recited a spell over her. Eventually she gave birth to a remarkable boy named Senosiris, who later on became a famous magician.

There is also epigraphical evidence of another case of sterility being cured by Imhotep.[1] The story relates to a lady named 'Thet Imhotep', who belonged to a family that reckoned among its members several princes of Memphis and high priests of Ptah. She was born in the ninth year of the reign of Ptolemy XIII, about 71 B.C., and when fourteen years old she was married to her half-brother, the priest P-Shere-en-Ptah.[2] During

XXVI. Amulet of Imhotep

which was a figure or ornament possessing magical power and worn as a preservative against sickness or misfortune.

Amulets associated with Imhotep are not frequently met with. Fig. xxv represents a specimen preserved in the Egyptological Museum of the Liverpool University. Fig. xxvi illustrates one at Berlin. Cf. E. Holländer, *Äsculap und Venus*, 1928, pp. 247, 249.

[1] The details are given in a famous stela of the Ptolemaic Period, now in the British Museum, Egyptian Sculpture Gallery, Bay 29, Reg. No. 147 (Exhibition No. 1027). Cf. E. A. Budge, *Guide to the Egyptian Sculpture Galleries*, 1909, p. 275; S. Birch, 'Two Egyptian Tablets of the Ptolemaic Period', in *Archaeologia*, xxxix (1863), p. 315.

[2] This stela is also in the British Museum, Egyptian Sculpture Gallery, Bay 27, Reg. No. 886 (Exhibition No. 1026).

the first twelve years of her married life she gave birth to three daughters, but had no son, which caused her husband great grief, since he had no one to succeed him in his high office. She and her husband prayed to the god Imhotep, the son of Ptah, for a son; in response, the god, appearing to P-Shere-en-Ptah in a dream, promised to grant his prayer provided that he carried out certain extensive works at the sacred spot of Ankhtowē at Memphis where his body was buried. When the priest awoke, he caused the works to be taken in hand, and soon after they were completed (i. e. 49 B. C.) his wife gave birth to a son who was named Imhotep, and surnamed Pedi-Bast.[1]

In connexion with these prayers for a son, it must be borne in mind that the Egyptian dreaded the lack of a legitimate male child as a dire calamity. He longed for a son to tend him in old age, to close his eyes in death, to give him ritual burial, to bestow his daughters in marriage, and to cherish his memory, when he had passed into the Duat or Underworld.

Incubation sleep[2] in the temples was resorted

[1] British Museum, Egyptian Sculpture Gallery, Reg. No. 188 (Exhibition No. 1030); Bevan, *Ptolemaic Egypt*, 1927, p. 349.

[2] Incubation was by no means confined to the shrines of Imhotep. For example, at the temple of Medinet Habu oracles were received through incubation from Thoth who was wont to descend on the temple each night in the form of an

to for many forms of sickness, oracular intimations being given by the deity during natural or drug-produced mantic dreams and interpreted by the priests. In cases where the patient failed to fall asleep a priest would present himself on behalf of the deity, act as his mouthpiece and indicate the treatment that would ensure recovery. Doubtless in many cases a cure was effected through the awakening of an expectation of cure in the sleeper himself. Suffering men and women must have derived unspeakable pleasure when they reached Imhotep's temple and contemplated the sacred image on which all their hopes were centred. In the divine presence many aches and pains would be relieved and this would raise the hope of a speedy and complete cure. Temple-sleep thus became a means of faith-healing. Suggestions received during dreams that a cure had been effected were found to have achieved their purpose when the sufferer awoke. The more emotional and highly strung the patient, the greater the probability of cure.

Even in the case of incurable disease, comfort of inestimable value to a miserable suppliant might be dispensed. We may further feel confident that,

ibis. P. Boynan, *Thoth the Hermes of Egypt*, 1922, p. 168. Cf. also G. Foucart, on ' Dreams and Incubation ' in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, v, p. 34.

after recovery, many grateful persons would linger in a state of rapture near the beneficent deity who had healed their pains and diseases. Doubtless also valuable gold and silver ornaments, statues, stelae and other gifts were presented to Imhotep's temples and thus enhanced their wealth and prestige. In other cases models of the diseased organ, such as an eye, an ear, a foot or even a head were dedicated to the god as ex-votos.[1]

The widespread prevalence of incubation in the ancient world testifies to its value in many psycho-neurotic and even physical maladies. When the spirit is released during sleep from the trammels of the body its communion with the deity seems to be facilitated, and under the powerful influence of suggestion both psychical and physical disorders may be alleviated.[2] The reality of remarkable cures is admitted even by unprejudiced inquirers into their veracity. Who indeed amongst us is able to assign the limits within which body and mind can influence each other both for good or ill?

[1] Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, p. 527. Some specimens of Egyptian votive offerings in wood, bronze and blue glazed ware may be seen in museums of Egyptology.

[2] Job (xxxiii. 15 ff.) describes this communion of the deity with man during sleep.

D. The Medical Library of the Asklepieion at Memphis

Every important temple in ancient Egypt was equipped with a more or less extensive library of books written on leather or papyrus. Some of these were sacred books required for the daily ritual; others would be copies of the Book of the Dead, which every educated Egyptian learned by heart. There would also be rolls for the keeping of daily accounts, documents relating to the priests and registers of gifts and endowments that had been presented by devotees of the deity to which the temple was dedicated.[1]

In the case of important medical schools such as those at Memphis, Thebes, Heliopolis and Sais, at any rate during the period of the Ptolemies and Caesars, in addition to religious and business papyri there would be a collection of medico-magical rolls inscribed with the spells, incantations and therapeutic prescriptions which would be in daily use for the instruction of the budding practitioners of physic and of magic.[2]

[1] Examples of such documents have survived and are preserved in various museums.

[2] Brugsch has described the library in the great temple at Edfu, which may probably be regarded as typical of other temple libraries. *Die Aegyptologie*, 1891, pp. 156 ff. A list of the books inscribed on the walls at Edfu is given by E. v. Bergmann, *Hieroglyphische Inschriften*, 1879, p. 46, Pls. 64 ff.

At the Asklepieion at Memphis as well as at the adjacent temple of Ptah would naturally be preserved the holy books of Thoth on which every physician was compelled to base the treatment of his patients. Should he fail to do so he might be punished for not having adhered to the prescriptions that were authorized for use in different maladies.

It is not unlikely that there are still extant some of the original papyrus rolls that belonged either to the imposing temple of Ptah or to that of his divine son Imhotep. In the early nineteenth century two medical papyri written in hieratic were discovered buried in an earthen pot about ten feet from the surface near the ruins of the Step-Pyramid of Sakkarah. The more important of the two, known as the Berlin Medical Papyrus, is assigned by Brugsch, on grounds of palaeography, to the XIXth or XXth Dynasty (*ca.* 1350–1090 B.C.). The second Papyrus dates from the reign of Ramesses II and belongs therefore to the fourteenth century B.C. It contains, however, one passage whose language points to a much earlier period, indeed to that of the pyramid builders. In regard to these papyri, Brugsch writes as follows:[1]

'We have no doubt that both these MSS., but especially the one which we have published under

[1] These Papyri are described by Passalacqua in his *Catalogue raisonné et historique*, p. 207, where they are numbered

the name of the Berlin Medical Papyrus, originally belonged to the Medical Library of Memphis and is the one which Galen[1] referred to when speaking of a panacea (πολύχρηστον φάρμακον) which the Egyptians called Isis.' . . .

'Further, we know that the temple of Ptah at Memphis possessed amongst its other treasures various papyri dealing with various special departments of medicine. This indeed is rendered more probable by the fact that the temple of the god Imhotep (Imouthes), the son of Ptah-Vulcan, was situated near to that of his divine father at Memphis, and that this deity was regarded as the Egyptian Asklepios. These medical books at Memphis were undoubtedly amongst those which the Egyptian physicians were by law compelled to use in the treatment of the sick. If they failed to do so they might be found guilty of having by their negligence caused the death of a person not treated by the sacred prescription.'[2]

1558 and 1559. It is very doubtful whether Brugsch's opinion is correct. The Berlin Medical Papyrus is very corrupt and full of blunders; it is more likely to be an ill-copied roll belonging to a local practitioner than a temple book.

[1] Galen, *Opera Omnia*, ed. by Kühn, xiii, p. 774.

[2] H. Brugsch, *Recueil de Monuments Égyptiens*, 1862, ii, p. 102, where the Papyrus is published *in extenso*. Brugsch's facsimile of the Berlin Papyrus is an unsatisfactory one. A much better edition is that of Wreszinski, *Der grosse medizinische Papyrus der Berliner Museums* (P. Berlin, 3038), 1909. This contains a photographic facsimile, hieroglyphic transcript, commentary and glossary. Cf. also Maspero, *Histoire ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, 1904, p. 88.

Of medical interest is also the ancient Papyrus roll ap-

A further indication of the value of this collection of medico-magical books is the fact that various Greek physicians, including Theophrastus, Galen [1] and Dioscorides,[2] mention drugs, prescriptions or methods of diagnosis which they had learnt in the temple of Ptah or of Imhotep at Memphis [3] and which subsequently spread to Europe. Indeed, many Egyptian drugs and prescriptions were copied by the Greeks and in due course were incorporated into the Pharmacopoeias of other nations.

As an example may be mentioned a prescription for plasters quoted from Heras who wrote about drugs shortly before Dioscorides. One plaster was called *ἱερὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἐν Μέμφει Ἡφαιστείου* and was practically a lead plaster (litharge and olive oil) with various other ingredients.[4]

A second example is a plaster attributed by some persons to Hermon the *ἱερογραμματεύς*, but by others said to be derived from the temple of Ptah in Egypt (*τὸ Ἡφαιστεῖον ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ*). This plaster was made of dittany and used as an application to wounds.

parently discovered at the temple of Imhotep at Memphis in the time of Nectanebo II and described above (p. 45).

[1] Galen, b. A.D. 131.

[2] Dioscorides lived in the first century A.D.

[3] Maspero, *Études de Mythologie*, iii, pp. 301–2.

[4] Galen, *Opera Omnia*, ed. by Kühn, xiii, pp. 776–8.

Dioscorides mentions the names of many Egyptian drugs in his *materia medica*; thus the Egyptian name for castor oil κῖκι became a well-recognized Greek word.[1] He also gives a prescription for an Egyptian incense or fumigation called cyphi or Kyphi which resembles that in the Ebers Papyrus[2] and was introduced into Greek medicine under the name κῦφι.[3]

Pomegranate root as a remedy for worms, and crocodile or lizard's dung for eye diseases are other remedies described both in the Ebers Papyrus and by Greek writers from Galen to Paulus Aegineta.[4]

These are some examples of Egyptian prescrip-

[1] Herodotus, ii. 94. This term, although stated by several classical writers to be the Egyptian word for castor oil, has never been found in hieroglyphic texts. Cf. Dawson, *American Druggist*, 1926, May.

[2] Dioscorides, ed. by Kühn, i, p. 24. Cf. also H. Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie*, 1891, p. 411; G. Parthey, *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, 1850, pp. 143, 277.

[3] Apuleius Barbarus also mentions a large number of Egyptian drugs and gives what purports to be their Egyptian names. Loret has written a memoir on Kyphi entitled 'Le Kyphi, parfum sacré des anciens Égyptiens'. Cf. also C. J. S. Thompson, *The Mystery and Lure of Perfumes*, 1927, p. 48.

[4] For further details cf. H. E. L. Lüring, *Die medicinische Kentnisse der alten Ägypter berichtenden Papyri, verglichen mit den medicinischen Schriften griechischer und römischer Autoren*, 1888. Lüring shows by textual comparison the indebtedness of Greek and Roman writers to papyric medicine.

tions and drugs that were copied by the Greeks and incorporated into the literature of other nations. W. R. Dawson states that traces of Egyptian pharmacology can be discovered in Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Syriac and Western European treatises of medicine.[1] Further examples will be given in the Chapter entitled ' Ancient Egyptian Medicine '.

Little is known of the medical curriculum pursued by the young magician-physicians at the Asklepieion. Stray hints, however, can be gathered from inscriptions in the papyri or reliefs on the tomb-walls.

In view of the reliance placed on magic as a branch of therapeutics doubtless lectures on the influence of magic and on the selection of suitable spells would form an early subject of instruction, and with this would be associated references to Egyptian history, especially to incidents in which magic had been useful in the history of the gods and might therefore presumably be equally useful in similar contingencies in human life.

Botany certainly received considerable attention in order that the young practitioner might become familiar with the numerous healing herbs of Egypt

[1] W. R. Dawson, *Asiatic Review*, 1926, p. 176. Cf. also E. A. Budge, *Syrian Anatomy, Pathology and Therapeutics*, 1913, i, p. x ; ii, pp. 100, 114–15, 665, 726.

that were used by men ' more skilled in medicine than any of human kind '. Possibly also a herb garden may have existed in proximity to the Asklepieion so as to facilitate the study of ' virtuous herbs '.

The Egyptians were always fond of collecting rare foreign animals and plants, and these are often mentioned in inscriptions. Many of the vegetable drugs in the medical papyri were imported and bear Semitic and other foreign names. The Pharaoh Tuthmosis III adorned the walls of the temple of Karnak with pictures of plants which he brought back with him from his foreign expeditions.[1]

Lessons in anatomy and physiology must have been of the most primitive description, since, as we shall see in the Chapter on ' Ancient Egyptian Medicine ', even the elementary principles of physiology were unknown or at least misunderstood. On the other hand osteology had made more progress, and the position and appearance of the large viscera was familiar as a result of the practice of mummification. Moreover at the Asklepieion there must have been some post-mortem work, since it was the custom to examine bodies after death in order to ascertain the disease from

[1] J. Capart gives an excellent account with views of the so-called ' Botanic Garden ' of Karnak. Cf. *Thèbes*, 1925, pp. 176–7 and Figs. 100–3.

which the person had died. Lessons and demonstrations in practical surgery were doubtless also given, the knives being apparently of flint.[1]

Lessons in clinical medicine also held an important place in the curriculum, students being taught rudimentary diagnosis, and to watch the comparative effects of treatment by magic spells and by physical remedies, each method being applicable in certain pathological conditions.

Therapeutics had scarcely made sufficient progress for special rolls of papyrus to be devoted purely to treatment. Thus the Ebers Papyrus dealt with a range of subjects which in modern medicine would extend over many volumes. Nevertheless it is clear that the art of combining drugs so as to obtain an attractive appearance and taste, quite apart from questions of dosage and frequency of administration received attention.

In the temple libraries well-written papyri were apparently used for teaching purposes, while inferior copies were made for the use of students and practitioners, when they left their *alma mater*.

E. Festivals in Honour of Imhotep

Religious festivals played a prominent part in the life of the Egyptians and were celebrated by vociferous demonstrations of joy. Great proces-

[1] Capart, *Rue des Tombes*, pp. 66–7.

sions were organized in which took part the priests with shaven heads, clad in linen of spotless white, as well as throngs of devotees, all eager to do honour to their deities. Music, singing, dancing, floral decorations, banquets all added to the gaiety of the ceremonies, while at night numerous torches illuminated the streets with flickering lights and prolonged the feasting far into the night. Important festivals might extend over several days or even weeks.[1]

Light has recently been thrown on the festivals held in honour of the god Imhotep by an inscription discovered on the carved pedestal of a lost statue, now in the British Museum; it is possible that this pedestal had been carved and inscribed in order to support a statue of Imhotep himself. The accompanying inscription tells us that under the Ptolemies regular festivals were celebrated at Memphis in honour of the god Imhotep.[2]

The inscription begins with an address to his lord Imhotep, son of Ptah, from his divine friend, the prophet and scribe Pedi-Bast: 'I am thy son, perfect in the service of thy *Ka* on all thy festival

[1] Erman gives an illustration of a festival in which a deity placed in a divine barque is being carried in procession. *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 276.

[2] For a fuller description of the pedestal cf. H. Gauthier, *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xiv (1918), p. 33; N. Aimé-Giron, ibid., xxiii (1924), p. 8.

days, at the commencement of the seasons and on all festivals taken together.'

There were six festivals in all during the year, celebrated according to Gauthier on the following dates :[1]

Day of Festival	*Egyptian Month*	*Date*
16th day 3rd month of summer.	Epiphi.	31st May.
11th day 2nd month of winter.	Mekhīr.	27th Dec.
9th day 4th month of summer.	Mesorē.	23rd June.
17th day 4th month of summer.	Mesorē.	1st July.
23rd day 4th month of summer.	Mesorē.	7th July.
4th day 2nd month of summer.	Paoni.	19th April.

It will be observed these festivals are not arranged in the chronological order of the months of the year ; their order corresponds to certain events in the life and death of the god Imhotep which they are intended to commemorate.

[1] The impossibility of bringing the Egyptian dates into harmony with modern chronology, as Gauthier has attempted to do, has been alluded to above (p. 4). Cf. also H. Brugsch, *Matériaux pour le Calendrier des anciens Égyptiens*, p. 80. An excellent statement of the methods employed in Egyptian dating in the light of modern knowledge is given by A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 1927, pp. 203–6.

A. First festival.

'The day on which was born Imhotep of his father Ptah and his mother Khreduonkh; the heart of the great god, the father of the gods, is delighted at seeing him.'

B. Second festival.

'The day of the first festival of Imhotep; he appears before his father Ptah and Sekhmet the great one beloved of Ptah. She ordains . . . and glorifies his image.'

C. Third festival.

'The day of the slaying of the vile Asiatics by Sekhmet, the great one, beloved of Ptah. She tears off their limbs whilst burning them. She capsizes their boats in the region of the land of the Red Lake.'

D. Fourth festival.

'The day of lamentation of his father Ptah for Imhotep when he (?) died . . . his body . . . his spirit when it was re-united (?)' (probably an allusion to the separation of spirit and body at the moment of the death of the god).

E. Fifth festival.

'The day on which Imhotep reposes before his father after his death: he enters and goes out before the great god: the re-union of his spirit with his body takes place and

he rests in the great Dehan, a cavern dear to his heart.'

F. Sixth festival.

'The day on which the spirit of Imhotep departs towards the great place of sojourn of this god upon the whole earth.'

This list of Imhotep's festivals throws some interesting light on the incidents in his life that were commemorated. Thus the first festival recalls the fact that Imhotep was born of a mortal woman, and the joy of his father Ptah in the birth of his son. The second one seems to refer to a solemn procession in which the statue of Imhotep was conducted to the adjacent temple of Ptah, and where doubtless the rites usually observed at the shrines of deities were practised.

The third festival may be an allusion to some injury done to Imhotep by the vile Asiatics, of which no details are given, but for which Sekhmet took summary vengeance. The fourth festival commemorates his father Ptah's lamentations at the death of Imhotep, while the fifth relates to the laying out and burial of his body. The great Dehan alluded to was probably a cavern situated in the necropolis of Memphis associated with the tomb of Imhotep. Finally the sixth festival relates to his apotheosis.

No doubt at these festivals of Imhotep, the image of the deity would be removed from the

'Holy of Holies', covered over with a veil, placed on a sacred barque and borne round the town on the shoulders of the priests. At certain appointed stations the bearers would deposit their burden on a pedestal when incense would be burnt and prayers offered before the shrine. At last the veil was withdrawn and the sacred image disclosed to the eyes of the worshippers.

We know that numerous offerings were made to the deities that were being honoured, on the occasion of other great religious festivals. If the gifts were on a similar scale in the case of Imhotep's temple at Memphis, the altar of offerings would be laden with vast quantities of bread and meat and with numerous jars of wine and beer, apart from less important gifts of flowers, honey, &c. Many of these gifts were doubtless brought as thank-offerings for recovery from illness or accident or in anticipation of similar benefits in years to come. Probably no deity in all Egypt had more grateful devotees than the beloved god of medicine who restored health and strength, perhaps even vision or speech, to some miserable suppliant at his shrine. The gifts were devoted to the cult of the deity, to the maintenance of the temple ritual and of the priests, as well as to the refreshment of pilgrims who had travelled from far and near in order to honour Imhotep.

F. Bas-Reliefs of Imhotep as Deity

On the walls of various Egyptian and Nubian temples may be seen many mural representations of the deity Imhotep carrying the *uas* sceptre and the *ankh* ☥ or symbol of life. In some cases the god is in a standing, in other cases in a sitting, posture. All these mural figures belong to the Persian or later periods, that is are later than 525 B.C.

The figures are usually accompanied by inscriptions addressed to Imhotep and the cotemplar deities by the Ptolemaic king who had constructed or renovated the temple. For instance, the inscription attached to the relief in the temple of Kasr el-Agouz referred to below reads thus: 'Son of Ptah, beneficent god, begotten by the god of the South Wall,[1] giver of life, who bestows gifts on those he loves, who listens [? to those who call upon him], who provides remedies for all diseases.'[2]

The following is a list of the more important reliefs.

I. *Thebes.*

(*a*) Karnak.

In the temple of Ptah and Hathor at Karnak which was erected in honour of the Memphite god Ptah, the Vulcan of the Greeks, there are

[1] i.e. Ptah. [2] D. Mallet, *Le Kasr el-Agoûz*, 1909, p. 38.

two bas-reliefs of Imhotep. In the first, which will be found in the hall of which the roof is supported by two pillars, are depicted Ptah, Hathor, Samtowē, Imhotep and Amenophis son of Hapu.

The second relief is on the S. side of the northern girdle wall of the temple of Amūn, where Ptolemy XI is seen venerating a series of gods, the last division including Imhotep and Amenophis son of Hapu.[1]

Ptolemy IV Philopator I.

(*b*) Deir el-Bahari.

In the temple of Hatshepsowet a standing figure of Imhotep is seen not far from that of the deified sage Amenophis,[2] who was also regarded as a patron of healing.

The mural relief will be found in the most

[1] W. R. Dawson, *Aegyptus*, 1926, i, p. 130 ; A. E. Weigall, *Guide to the Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, 1913, p. 106 ; cf. also Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 15 d (Textband, iii, pp. 6, 7). Imhotep appears only as a god with the Memphite deities, the Osiris group, and Amenophis son of Hapu never with the Sun-deities. It will be observed that in most of the figures here described Amenophis appears as a sort of pendant to Imhotep. This association is somewhat surprising seeing the great dynastic interval between the two men. On the other hand, both were famous sages as well as architects and had filled the office of vizier to their respective kings.

[2] E. Naville, *Dêr el-Bahari*, Part v, p. 11 and Pl. cxlix. Cf. also *J. of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1914, i, p. 96 ; Baedeker's *Egypt*, Plan of Dêr el-Bahari, G ; A. E. Weigall, *Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, Plan of Dêr el-Bahari, Nos. 54–5.

northerly hall of the Sanctuary, where Imhotep will be seen on the W. wall and Amenophis on the E.[1]

Ptolemy IX Euergetes II.

(*c*) Medinet Habu.

In this temple of Thoth Imhotep is represented in company with several other gods of healing. Thus there is Thoth, a deity enjoying the reputation both of a magician and of a god of medicine. Another god of healing, named Teos, was also honoured; lastly comes Amenophis. Imhotep, Amenophis and Teos were all deified sages and appear as *paredroi* of Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt, while King Ptolemy IX Euergetes II is portrayed as sacrificing to Thoth and to these two sages. The fact that the latter were set by the side of Thoth shows the high honour in which they were held.

Ptolemy IX Euergetes II.

(*d*) Deir el-Medineh.

In this small though graceful mortuary temple the deified Imhotep is again represented by the side of the deified sage Amenophis. The two figures may be seen on the partition separating the open court from the pronaos. In that partition wall are two columns with elaborate capitals and bearing

[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 32 c (Textband, iii, p. 186). P. Boylan, *Thoth, the Hermes of Egypt*, 1922, pp. 166–8.

the figures of Imhotep and Amenophis.[1] This temple was begun by Ptolemy IV, continued by Ptolemy VII, and finished by Ptolemy IX.

Ptolemy IX Euergetes II.

(*e*) Kasr el-Agouz.

This temple, which was erected to the god Thoth, consists of a vestibule and three chambers. On the left entrance wall of the second one, Ptolemy IX pays homage to Thoth, Imhotep and Amenophis son of Hapu. Imhotep is seen wearing a short *shenti* like that of Thoth, while Amenophis sitting behind Imhotep is wearing the longer *shenti* of ceremony.[2]

Ptolemy IX Euergetes II.

II. *Philae.*

On the Pylon of Imhotep's temple at Philae are five figures of the god, three of which are standing and two sitting. In one instance King Ptolemy V is offering incense to the god ; in another the same King is offering an image of the goddess Maēt ; in a third he is offering wine to Imhotep as well as to other deities. In the fourth case the King is offering

[1] A. E. Weigall, *Guide to the Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, 1913, p. 277 ; Baedeker, *Egypt*, 1914, p. 317.

[2] D. Mallet, *Le Kasr el-Agoûz*, 1909, p. 38. Other reliefs of Imhotep probably also existed in this temple. Cf. also W. R. Dawson, *Aegyptus*, 1926, i, p. 131 ; Baedeker's *Egypt*, 1914, p. 330.

incense and libations, while in the last case he is seen grasping a club and standing in the presence of the god.[1]

At the entrance to the temple is another standing figure of the god Imhotep associated with Isis and Osiris and belonging to the same period.[2]

Ptolemy V Epiphanes.

In another part of the same temple the god is shown standing and associated with Isis and Harpocrates, all three being worshipped by eight cynocephalic baboons.[3]

Ptolemy VII Eupator.

An interesting representation is that seen on the W. side of the gate of Ptolemy Philadelphus. Here the Emperor Tiberius is seen offering incense to Imhotep, who stands before him holding the *ankh* in his right and the *uas* sceptre in his left hand.[4]

Tiberius.

Finally, a fine coloured relief forms the frontispiece of this volume (p. 62).

[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 18. Cf. also H. G. Lyons, *Report on the Island and Temples of Philae*, Pl. x; A. E. Weigall, *Guide to the Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, 1913, p. 475. According to Sethe (*Imhotep*, p. 4), the mother of Imhotep, Khreduonkh, is seen with a human head and the hood of a vulture and double feathers.

[2] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part iv, Pl. 19 (Textband, iv, pp. 136–7).

[3] Lepsius, op. cit., Pl. 25.

[4] Lepsius, op. cit., Pl. 75.

III. *Edfu.*

A representation of Imhotep occurs on the inner aspect of the wall surrounding the temple of Edfu on its W. side. He is wearing the leopard skin, as was usual for chief priests, and reading from a scroll the history of a civil war waged between the adherents of Horus and those of Set, which culminates in the two great defeats of the latter at Heliopolis and Ha or Hat.[1]

In this scene a priest called the *menhu* or slaughterer is seen cutting to pieces an animal which may be either a pig or a hippopotamus, representing Typhon (Set). Meanwhile Imhotep, the chief ritualist, clad in a leopard's skin and wearing a sort of helmet, reads the justification of Horus. Close by is the following inscription :

' Chief priest, Scribe of the God, Imhotep, the great One, Son of Ptah.'

Naville thus refers to the scene : ' This priest, *Imhotep uer si Ptah*, interests us particularly, not because he is invested with one of the chief sacer-

[1] In the Plan of the Temple of Edfu, given by Baedeker, the relief is at the S. end of the broad inner passage passing round the temple on its W. side. In the Plan given by Weigall (*Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, p. 337) the relief is numbered 53. Cf. also De Rougé, *Inscriptions et Notices du Temple d'Edfou*, ii, Pl. lxxxix.

dotal posts in the temple of Edfou, but because he was also its architect ; at least he directed the construction of certain parts of the edifice. This is the only monument where we find the signature of the artist who made its plan.' [1]

Imhotep proclaims Horus justified in the *usekht*, i. e. in one of the great halls of the temple.[2]

Ptolemy IX Euergetes II.

IV. *Nubia.*

(*a*) Debôt.

In this temple Imhotep is represented three times, once in the temple itself, and twice in the chapel of the Nubian King Azkheramon.[3]

(i) On the south side of the pronaos the inscription reads ' Imhotep, son of Ptah, born of Khreduonkh, the Ram lord of Mendes . . . of Ptah in Ankhtowē (necropolis of Memphis) '. He is there assimilated to the sacred Ram of Mendes.

(ii) On the north wall the inscription reads ' the chief lector priest and royal scribe Imhotep, great in (? remedies) in every country, who every-

[1] E. Naville, *Textes relatifs au mythe d'Horus, recueillis dans le Temple d'Edfou*, 1870, p. 15, Pl. xi. Cf. also A. E. Weigall, *Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, 1913, p. 345.

[2] *Ancient Egypt*, 1922, p. 42.

[3] G. Roeder, *Debôd bis Bab Kalabchah*, 1911, i, pp. 47, 52, 53 ; ii, Pls. 12, 13, 44. Cf. also Gauthier, *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xiv (1918), p. 40.

where comes . . . to him who calls him, son of Ptah, powerful in the . . . like Horus . . . giving life to all . . . '

(iii) On the south wall the inscription reads ' the chief royal scribe for Upper and Lower Egypt, with agreeable hands when he . . . is healing all ills, giving eternal life like Re, mighty in all the earth, Imhotep, son of Ptah, born of Khreduonkh, the Ram, lord of Mendes, . . . ? beloved of Ptah in Ankhtowē, endowed like Re with life for ever.'

? Ptolemy VII Eupator.

Weigall thus describes one of the scenes :

' As one enters the roofless pronaos the reliefs on the inner sides of the doorway are seen to represent Horus and Thoth pouring a vessel of holy water over the approaching worshipper, while behind them " the Chief Reader-priest, the Chief Scribe of the North and South ", the demigod Imḥotep, sees that the necessary ritual is said.' [1]

This address is interesting as showing that the erstwhile human titles such as Chief Reader-Priest, Chief Scribe of the North and South, are still applied to Imhotep after his apotheosis. His earlier title of demigod also still clings to him.

? Ptolemy VII Eupator.

[1] A. E. Weigall, *Guide to the Antiquities of Upper Egypt*, 1913, p. 492 ; *Report on the Antiquities of Lower Nubia*, 1907, p. 58.

(*b*) Dakkah.

Here there are two scenes in which Imhotep appears.[1]

? Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II.

(*c*) Kalabshah.

In the last hall but one (lowest series on the S. wall) Imhotep is represented as receiving a gift of incense from the Emperor Augustus. He is seen wearing a uraeus and holding a sceptre and *ankh*.[2]

(*d*) Meroë.

One of the reliefs in a pyramid of Meroë (No. 12) may be intended to represent Imhotep, but the question is open to doubt. The reliefs in the chapel concerned are reproduced by Lepsius,[3] and the drawing in question shows a figure similar to that of the deified Imhotep, but without *ankh*, and only holding an ordinary staff instead of the *uas* sceptre. Budge describes the scene as that of 'The deceased adoring an ancestor (or I-em-ḥetep).'[4]

[1] H. Gauthier, *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, 1918, xiv, Fasc. i, p. 40.

[2] H. Gauthier, *Le Temple de Kalabchah*, 1911, i, p. 88, Pl. xxvii b.

[3] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Part v, Pl. 26.

[4] E. A. Budge, *The Egyptian Sudan*, i, p. 400. These pyramids are believed by Budge (*The Nile*, 1912, p. 895) to belong to a period between *ca.* 400 B. C. and A. D. 250.

G. The Last Phase

The interesting question arises as to how late the worship of Imhotep lasted on during the Christian era. How did the impact of the new religion as it spread from Palestine to Egypt affect the ancient cult of Imhotep ? Light from several sources will help us in solving this question.[1] Thus the palaeography of the *graffiti* at the sanatorium at Deir el-Bahari which relate to Imhotep indicates that they probably belong to the second century A. D., but not much beyond it.[2] There was, however, a special local reason for their discontinuance. The raids of the barbarian tribes of Nubia in the middle of the third century would doubtless interfere with security of life, frighten away invalids, and check pilgrimages to the shrine. Probably, therefore, Deir el-Bahari ceased to be a health resort for the Greeks and Romans soon after A. D. 200 and no later evidence of the cult of Imhotep at this temple is available.

In the north of Egypt, on the other hand, there is evidence that the worship of the Egyptian deity of medicine continued considerably later, and indeed that his reputation gradually grew in comparison with that of other Egyptian gods, until by

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, tr. by C. D. Yonge, xxii, 14, p. 306.

[2] Milne, *J. of Egyptian Archaeology*, I (1914), p. 98.

the fourth century he had come to be regarded as the leading divinity of Memphis.[1] Meanwhile profound changes had taken place in the internal and external economy of Egypt. The country in fact had become part of a new world. Her glorious history—one of the most momentous epochs in the history of man—had closed, and she was living an artificial life in which she no longer played an active part.

The collapse of the ancient Egyptian civilization was due to a variety of causes acting cumulatively. One of these causes was the passing of the country under the guardianship of Rome in the year 30 B. C. Henceforth she became a vassal of the Roman Empire and was governed by its representative who too often regarded the country as a sheep

[1] Imhotep appears still to have retained his reputation as a patron of magic and alchemy, as the alchemist Zosimos (3rd c. A. D.) entitled one of his works *Ἰμούθ*, i. e. Imhotep. Pauly, *Real-Encyclopädie*, ix (ii), col. 1217. In the *Demotic Medical Papyrus* of London and Leiden, edited by Griffith and Thompson, 1904, i, pp. 15, 39, are described the processes of divination used by ' the great god Imuthes '.

W. Otto (*Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 1908, ii, p. 214) writes: ' It is very remarkable that the deified Imhotep, who was probably not acknowledged as a god until the Saite period and did not receive his fullest recognition as god till the Ptolemaic period, by the time of Ammianus Marcellinus (*ca.* A. D. 330–400) had come to be the chief deity of Memphis.'

to be sheared, or as a rich mine to be exploited, not as a trust to be administered. The steady drain involved by the annual tribute of corn to feed the hungry Romans, combined with the extortions of her governors, depleted the supply of capital wealth. The bucolic rebellion of A. D. 172 was a symptom of the national distress and aggravated the exhaustion of the country. From this period down to about A. D. 300 the land became more and more impoverished.

Another potent influence at work in the disintegration of the ancient régime was the spread of Christianity, whose doctrines were well established in Alexandria in the second century and were gradually being diffused throughout the country. In spite of persecutions the number of churches steadily grew, so that by about A. D. 300 many towns on the Nile were provided with places of Christian worship. The conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity (*ca.* A.D. 313) gave a further impetus to the new religion and caused many worshippers of the gods of Egypt to transfer their devotion to an austere form of Christianity. A fresh stimulus to the adoption of Christianity was the famous Edict issued in A. D. 380 by the Emperor Theodosius the Great, who ordered that Christianity should henceforth be the established religion in Egypt. Hun-

dreds of native temples were plundered, priests were forbidden under pain of death any longer to perform the sacred rites, forty thousand images of deities were destroyed at one fell swoop, and many temples were closed or converted into Christian churches.

In spite of imperial Edicts, however, the worship of the ancient Egyptian gods including doubtless Imhotep, continued at Philae, probably until the reign of Justinian who ascended the throne A. D. 527. The traditions of his skill in the *ars medendi*, dating from the glorious days of the early Dynasties, kept alive the popular confidence in him, even when faith in many of the other deities had faded away. Speaking generally, however, the national faith in the ancient deities was steadily weakening almost to a vanishing-point, and with that loss of faith the Egyptian priesthood and ritual would naturally disappear.[1] Associated with the progress of Christianity was the growth of Christian monasticism, which, while it had

[1] W. Otto, *Priester und Tempel im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 1908, ii, p. 214. Other references to the priests of Imhotep (*sc.* Asklepios) during the early Christian era will be found in Hieronymus, Vita S. Hilarionis, cap. 21 (Migne, *Patrol. Latina*, xxiii, p. 38); Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* i, cap. 21, 399.

An account of early Christianity in Egypt is given by W. Scott, *Hermetica*, i, pp. 65 ff.

sprung from Egyptian monasticism, had in course of time become an important adjunct to the new religion. These monasteries indeed frequently occupied buildings that had previously been Egyptian temples, and naturally brought all native religious observances to an end. So numerous had the monks become that in the fourth century the Emperor Valens (A. D. 364–78) sent three thousand troops into the desert of Nitria to compel the able-bodied ascetics who had retired there to enlist in the imperial armies. In that desert alone there lived no less than five thousand monks.[1]

Further, a large amount of labour was withdrawn by the monasteries from the economic resources of the country and devoted to ecclesiastical purposes. Thus, deprived of an important productive element in its population and drained of many of its material resources, the nation sank to a low economic level, so low indeed that the available capital was insufficient to support the miserably debased coinage. By A.D. 370 taxes were paid in kind and commerce was reduced to barter.

A third factor in the general disruption was the introduction of Greek culture and science, including Greek medicine. Ever since the founding of Alexandria in 331 B. C. Hellenic influences had

[1] E. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chaps. xxv and xxxvii.

gradually been permeating and undermining the ancient methods of treating the sick, based partly on experience and partly on magic, that had held sway for many centuries. The Egyptian magician-physicians had been content to use prescriptions that had been handed down for many generations, rarely testing their results by means of experiment, while, on the other hand, the patient was still encouraged in the old belief that the magic formulas which were recited whenever a potion was swallowed, were able to placate the evil spirits that had caused the disease and were at least as potent as the physical remedy.

This antiquated procedure now gave way under the influence of a spirit of inquiry and experiment, rapid progress being made in anatomy, physiology, *materia medica*, and pathology.[1] The result was that the primitive system of medicine which had been in vogue since the days of Imhotep passed into oblivion, the old order changing and giving place to new.

Lastly, amongst the forces which brought the

[1] An excellent summary is given by E. A. Budge in his *Syrian Anatomy, Pathology and Therapeutics*, 1913, i, pp. xxxvii ff. Cf. also F. H. Garrison, *History of Medicine*, 1921, p. 93 ; K. Sudhoff, *Studien z. Geschichte der Medizin* (Puschmann-Stiftung), 1909, Nos. 5, 6. The first great medical school of antiquity was established at Alexandria, where there were extensive laboratories, clinics and libraries.

ancient civilization of Egypt to an end were the hostile incursions into Egypt during the Roman period. Both the Blemmyes of the Eastern desert and the Nobadae of the Western desert harassed the Roman conquerors at intervals during the first three centuries of the Christian era, and the Emperor Diocletian (284–305) was obliged to put an end to their invasions by an annual subsidy.

The story of the political and religious disturbances that raged during these early centuries of our era is too long and complex to be told here ; suffice it to say that they combined to render the foreign occupation a period of stress and turmoil in which the constituent elements of early Egyptian civilization broke asunder. Indeed the final collapse of Egypt was largely due to the military government of the Romans, who did little to prevent the inroads of savages and allowed the country to lapse into barbarism. The Egyptian people had lost all desire for independence and did nothing to resist the oppressive alien government.

Few details have survived of the destruction of the glorious Egyptian temples at Philae, including that of Imhotep, for which the island was so justly famed.[1] Soon after the conversion of the

[1] Christianity in its early days appropriated many pagan practices, and among them were mummification, funerary rites and incubation at the shrines of deities of healing. Thus

Nobadae and Blemmyes to Christianity (*c.* A.D. 540) the Emperor Justinian sent the Pers-Armenian Narses to the island to put an end to the worship of Osiris, Isis, Hathor, Khnum and other deities. Narses threw the priests of the great temple of Isis into prison and sent the statues of the gods to Constantinople. It seems probable that the adjacent temple of Imhotep was dismantled at the same time, and that his organized worship as the deity of medicine ceased, after lasting for over 1,050 years (*ca.* 525 B.C.–A. D. *ca.* 550).

The old Egyptian religion, however, died very hard, and at Philae the cult of Isis and other native deities was maintained long after Chris-

the cures which formerly occurred at the temples of Imhotep were equally obtainable by incubation at the shrines of Christian saints such as St. Cosmas and St. Damian. These twin-brothers were both physicians who accepted no fees for their services (anargyroi) and who at one time were regarded as patrons of medicine. They were martyred *ca.* A. D. 287. A curious story is associated with incubation at the temple of Isis at Canopus to which professing Christians resorted and at which the goddess dispensed nocturnal cures. In order to put an end to this unhallowed resort to a pagan deity the patriarch Cyril discovered the bodies of two martyrs, Cyrus and John, in the church of St. Mark at Alexandria and then proceeded to dislodge Isis and to inter their bodies in her place. He next dedicated a church to these martyrs who continued to exercise the same mysterious healing powers that had previously been displayed by the great goddess Isis (J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, 1923, i, pp. 373–4).

tianity had become the legal religion. No doubt many patients continued to haunt the famous temple of Imhotep even though its cult had lost much of its popularity and prestige. About A.D. 577 bishop Theodorus converted part of the temple of Isis into a Christian church dedicated to St. Stephen, and probably the last ritual observances of the ancient religion came to an end. Moreover various other Christian churches were erected about this time. One church was built at Philae by the Copts in honour of Saint Michael and another in honour of Saint Athanasius. Where during long centuries had been celebrated the superb festivals associated with the great god Osiris and with the goddesses Isis and Hathor, and where had also been witnessed the mournful processions of sick and suffering persons to the shrine of Imhotep, might now be seen on all sides the symbols of Christian ceremonial and worship. We shall probably be safe in assuming that by about the middle of the sixth century A.D. the temple of Imhotep finally closed its doors, and that the religion of the Pharaohs made its last stand in the struggle against Christianity in the temples of Imhotep and Isis at Philae. The remarkable cures in these temples were superseded by those at the shrines of Christian saints, where incubation and other Egyptian practices continued in use.

Even such an epoch-making change, however, as the adoption of Christianity was not destined to endure. That religion only lasted from the Edict of Theodosius in A. D. 380 until the great religious and political upheaval of the year 640 [1] (i. e. 260 years later), when Egypt was conquered by the Moslems, and Islamism was forced on the nation. Many of the recent converts to Christianity now embraced Mohammedanism which has ever since remained the religion of Egypt.[2]

To-day the temples of Imhotep, of Hathor, of Isis and of other deities that formerly adorned Philae are largely stripped of their comeliness; sadly marred in their beauty are those ancient and famous shrines.[3] No longer do priests and devotees haunt the sacred precincts, bringing offerings and petitions to the deities. No longer do processions of the blind, the deaf, the maimed, the childless crave the oracular intervention of the far-famed

[1] Eighteen years after the Hegira, the year of the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina.

[2] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. li (ii).

[3] Literally true has come the prophetic farewell pronounced in the Hermetic books to that ancient religion which had endured through fifty centuries: 'O Egypt, Egypt, of thy religion nothing will remain but an empty tale, which thine own children in time to come will not believe; nothing will be left but graven words, and only the stones will tell of thy piety.'—W. Scott, *Hermetica*, 1924, i, p. 343.

Imhotep, who for so many years dispensed vision to the sightless, fertility to the barren woman, healing to the sick. Yet we are still the proud possessors of imposing ruins that recall the life and customs of the past and constitute a spiritual and aesthetic heritage of ancient Egypt. And, should the visitor ever be tempted to deplore the vandalism of the past, let him remember the fate that awaits all human institutions that have outlived their day. In the words of the immortal Morte d'Arthur : ' The old order changeth yielding place to new, and God fulfils Himself in many ways.'

CHAPTER V

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MEDICINE[1]

A SHORT *excursus* may be permitted in order to indicate the extraordinary development of the healing art that had been reached in the days of Imhotep. The full story is a fascinating one, but it cannot be told here. With scarcely a trace of infancy, the *ars medica* suddenly emerges, exhibiting an unparalleled stage of evolution in Egypt when compared with any other country. In the words of Foucart : ' The Egyptian science of healing constituted from the very beginning a system several thousand years in advance of the rest of human society.'[2] At the same time medicine was closely interwoven with magic, each of these elements acting and reacting on the other. The briefest survey of what had been achieved in the Pyramid age must suffice.

It will be convenient to summarize the progress made in the *ars medendi*, next to deal with the elements of magic and occultism which were closely interwoven with it, and to conclude with a short

[1] The author is under deep obligation to Mr. W. R. Dawson for valuable suggestions connected with this chapter.

[2] *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, iv, p. 752.

account of hygiene in early Egypt.[1] We shall discuss in turn :

A. Medicine.
B. Magic.
C. Hygiene.

A. Medicine

Fortunately a considerable number of medical documents has survived, written in the hieratic script on rolls of papyrus. The most important of these is the Ebers Papyrus[2] which was actually written in the early XVIIIth Dynasty, *ca.* 1550

[1] This classification is a purely artificial one, since magic may be as useful in therapeutics as opium, castor oil or any other drug. Indeed through its powers of suggestion magic has achieved many remarkable cures. In its broadest aspect medicine includes everything that is done to relieve misery and suffering.

[2] The other important medical papyri are the Hearst Papyrus about as ancient as the Ebers, the Berlin Medical Papyrus, No. 3038, written somewhat later, the Kahun Medical Papyrus, which is probably of the XIIth Dynasty, i. e. considerably earlier than the Ebers, the London Medical Papyrus, B.M. 10059, the Edwin Smith Papyrus, and another papyrus at Berlin, No. 3027, which contains a collection of spells and prescriptions for mothers and their babies. The Edwin Smith Papyrus is about to be published by J. H. Breasted, who states in a private communication that ' the internal evidence suggests a very early date, possibly as far back as Imhotep himself '.

For an excellent *résumé* of the subject cf. W. R. Dawson, *Science Progress*, xxii (1927), pp. 275–84.

B. C., but which was evidently compiled from one or more other books many centuries earlier. In fact the document itself states that some portions date from the Ist Dynasty, and therefore were in part at least in existence during Imhotep's lifetime in the IIIrd Dynasty. This papyrus contains a long list of prescriptions for numerous named ailments and specifies the remedies to be used, as well as their doses and the mode of their administration. Evidently considerable progress had been made, especially in methods of clinical examination, in diagnosis and in therapeutics. Further, there was some knowledge of the skeleton and of the successful treatment of fractures. The position and function of the stomach and intestines were familiar, as well as the fact that the great blood-vessels run from the heart to every part of the body. The Edwin Smith Papyrus suggests that there may have been in early Egypt medical practitioners who dissected the human body, organized their observations and based conclusions on facts they had observed. Evidently they acted on the principle *nec silet mors*.[1]

In the Ebers Papyrus is a long extract from an ancient work which deals with the functions of the heart and its vessels.[2] A duplicate of part of this

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Recueil Champollion*, 1922, p. 425.

[2] Ebers Papyrus, 99, 1–103, 18.

work occurs also in the Berlin Medical Papyrus;[1] both manuscripts, however, are so corrupt and obscure as to be scarcely intelligible. Another copy of the same passage occurs in the Edwin Smith Papyrus, but unfortunately this papyrus is so damaged at that point that it gives us no help. The general purport of the book, however, is clear. It is recognized that the heart is the centre of an elaborate system of ' vessels ' which proceed to every part of the body, the number in each region being specified. The functions of the heart as the pumping organ of the vascular system were certainly not understood, while on the other hand the relation of the pulse to the heart was clearly recognized. An attempt is also made to explain the effects of various morbid or pathological conditions arising from the abnormal behaviour of the heart. The Egyptians believed that the vessels conveyed air and water, an erroneous conclusion based probably on the conditions observed during the post-mortem treatment of the body, while this was subjected to the various manipulations of embalming.

The conception of air reaching to every part of the body was familiar, although the air was supposed to travel by the arteries. The breath when entering the nostrils was believed to penetrate

[1] Berlin Medical Papyrus, 15, 1–16, 3.

to the heart and internal organs, and to supply the whole blood abundantly. Even here, however, there is some confusion of ideas, as is exemplified by the statement : ' There are four vessels for his two ears, two on his left side and two on his right. The breath of life enters by his right ear, and the breath of death enters by his left ear.'[1]

Surgery was not highly developed. The knife and cautery were familiar, and simple operations were regularly performed on the head, neck and extremities, although surgeons never went so far as to open the abdomen. Fractures were treated with splints made of fibre,[2] and many observations on mummies show that union with but little displacement was secured.

Besides the Edwin Smith Papyrus,[3] which deals

[1] Papyrus Ebers, 100, 2–4.

[2] G. Elliot Smith, ' The most Ancient Splints ', *British Med. J.*, 1908, i, p. 732.

[3] Prof. Breasted has kindly allowed me to quote the following extract from his forthcoming edition of the Edwin Smith Papyrus :

' There is good evidence that this surgical treatise was written in the Old Kingdom (3000–2500 B.C.) and presumably in the early part of that remote age. The manuscript nowhere hints at the name or station of the author. We are free to wonder whether the author of this earliest known investigation of human anatomy and physiology could have been identical with our oldest known physician, the venerable Imhotep who lived in the thirtieth century B.C. However

with the treatment of wounds, the Papyrus Ebers contains a long extract (103, 19 ff.) which deals with the surgical treatment of boils, tumours and suppurating sores. Directions are given for the dissection of these swellings, for the removal of their morbid contents, and for the dressing of the wound. These directions are accompanied by appropriate prescriptions to maintain the strength and increase the recuperative powers of the patient.

The custom of mummification, although not connected with medicine either in purpose or practice, exercised a profound influence on the growth of that science. Not only did the opening of the abdomen and the removal of the viscera familiarize the Egyptians with the form and posi-

that may have been, it will probably have circulated as a book on surgery when the Great Pyramid of Gizeh was being built. There may be a hint of its title heading a quotation in the Papyrus Ebers, for we find there an isolated passage on the heart which is said to be quoted from another ancient medical book entitled " Secret Book of the Physician ". Now this passage on the heart, quoted in Papyrus Ebers, is also found in the Edwin Smith Papyrus, and has every appearance of being original there. If so, then Papyrus Ebers is quoting from the Edwin Smith Papyrus and the title of the source quoted is the ancient title of the Edwin Smith Papyrus (see commentary, p. 108). It is not improbable, therefore, that our surgical treatise was known to its ancient users as the " Secret Book of the Physician ".'—*The Edwin Smith Papyrus*, i, pp. 3, 9–10.

tion of many internal organs, but it reconciled the people of Egypt for more than thirty centuries to the idea of cutting the dead human body. Thus it overcame the popular prejudice against systematic dissection which prevented Greek physicians from acquiring a knowledge of practical anatomy in their own country.[1]

It is, however, in the realms of diagnosis and therapeutics that the most astounding advance had been made, indicating a real interest in disease. Knowledge was admittedly empiric, but the accumulated experience of remedies employed during many centuries had borne rich fruit. At least 15 distinct diseases of the abdomen, 11 of the bladder, 10 of the rectum and anus, 29 of the eyes, 6 of the ears, 18 of the skin were diagnosed and treated on definite principles. From the symptoms described in the papyri about 250 different kinds of disease can be distinguished. Evidently the physicians who practised on the banks of the Nile possessed in some measure the scientific spirit, were capable of accurate clinical observations, and competent to co-ordinate and interpret symptoms. In fact so minute a classification of disease implies considerable scientific advance.

In this connexion special reference may be

[1] G. Elliot Smith, *J. of Egyptian Archaeology*, i (1914), p. 190.

made to the very detailed account of the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of various disorders of the stomach which are given in the Papyrus Ebers.[1]

The same fundamental methods of diagnosis as are employed in our own clinics, viz. inspection, palpation and auscultation were used in Egypt. Inspection was resorted to for the discovery of any changes in the shape, colour or position of the visible parts of the body, such as the skin, hair, nails, &c.; it also included the urine and other excretions. Palpation was also used, especially as regards the abdominal organs, for ascertaining any abnormality in the consistence, position, shape or temperature of the viscera. Even fluctuation is referred to in the Papyrus Ebers, in passages where the physician is directed to discover if a swelling in any part of the body moves under pressure and then returns, or if it trembles while his hand is upon it. Lastly, it appears that auscultation was also employed in diagnosis.[2]

Recent research, based on the examination of mummies, has thrown much light on the diseases that prevailed in early Egypt. Evidence, for example, has been found of such conditions as spinal tuberculosis, gall-stones, appendicitis, talipes, gout, rheumatoid arthritis, dental caries,

[1] Papyrus Ebers, 36, 4 ff.

[2] M. Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, 1910, i, p. 26.

mastoid disease, Bilharzia infection and various forms of eye disease. Speaking generally it may be said that the diseases described in papyri or revealed in mummies are the same as those that attack the fellahin to-day.[1]

Herodotus in the following quotation refers to the prevalence of specialism as a feature of Egyptian medicine: 'The art of medicine is thus divided: each physician applies himself to one disease only, and not more. All places abound in physicians; some are for the eyes, others for the head, others for the teeth, others for the intestines, and others for internal disorders.'[2]

The medical papyri which have survived show by their heterogeneous contents that they were intended for the use of general practitioners, but there is no doubt that they are compilations containing extracts from a number of different works, each devoted to a particular part of the body, which lends support to the view that the original separate works, from which the medical papyri are derived, were the work of specialists. The Westcar Papyrus indicates that midwifery was

[1] G. Elliot Smith and Dawson, *Egyptian Mummies*, 1924, pp. 154–62.

[2] Herodotus, ii. 84. The passages of medical interest in Herodotus have been collected by W. R. Dawson, *Annals of Medical History*, vi (1924), No. 3, pp. 183 ff.

not regarded as a special department of medicine as was formerly believed.[1] Veterinary medicine was not overlooked, and a fragmentary papyrus (that of Kahun) devoted to that branch of the healing art has survived. Further evidence of the advanced state of Egyptian medicine may be found in the extensive *materia medica* which formed the *armamentarium medici*.

A large number of the drugs used several millennia ago still figures in modern Pharmacopoeias. The flora of Egypt was rich in herbs of healing, as Homer points out,[2] and evidently their therapeutic properties were carefully studied and utilized.

Amongst the medicinal plants frequently mentioned are many which modern writers have too rashly identified, a conspicuous example being the mandragora or mandrake ; the word so translated in the Egyptian texts is in reality a mineral.[3] If the long list of vegetable and mineral drugs is submitted to critical study, it must be admitted that comparatively few can be identified with cer-

[1] Erman, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, tr. by Blackman, 1927, p. 44.

[2] ' Earth the grain-giver yields herbs in the greatest plenty, many that are healing in the cup, and many baneful.' *Odyssey*, iv. 227.

[3] W. R. Dawson, ' The Substance called *Didi* by the Ancient Egyptians ', *J. of the Royal Asiatic S.*, 1927, ii, pp. 497–503.

tainty. Amongst the latter we find lettuce, dill, cumin, onions, leeks, castor oil, pomegranate root bark, fenugreek, styrax, cucumber, acacia pods, sycamore figs, caraway seeds, minium, red ochre, alum, salt, carbonate of soda and many others. Other drugs were derived from the animal body, such as gall and blood from the ox, lion, and hippopotamus, as well as fats from these and other animals ; even coprotherapy was common.[1] It is interesting to observe that the use of the secretions and parts of the animal body as remedies, now a world-wide practice, was first introduced by Egyptian physicians.[2] Thus botany, zoology and chemistry were all laid under contribution in therapeutics.

The forms in which remedies were administered showed some clinical insight into pathological processes. Gargles, salves, lozenges, inhalations,

[1] Many such fanciful remedies were prescribed in this country so recently as the seventeenth century and even later. Cf. the Pharmacopoeia of the Royal College of Physicians of London, A.D. 1651.

[2] The use of magic and of the secretions and parts of the animal body as remedies form two world-wide methods of practice that found their earliest illustrations in ancient Egypt. W. Osler, *The Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 1923, p. 13.

The importance of the secretions of the animal body in the therapeutics of the ancient world is described by Pliny, *Natural History*, Bk. XXVIII, chs. 7 ff. Indeed every *materia medica* up to the eighteenth century recognizes their value.

snuffs, suppositories, pills, capsules, enemata, fumigations, poultices and plasters were all employed.

The large number of remedies and prescriptions mentioned in the Ebers Papyrus proves conclusively that therapeutics were carefully studied. Remedies were even classified into special groups, amongst which were sedatives, narcotics, hypnotics, antispasmodics, mydriatics, myotics, cosmetics, expectorants, tonics, emetics, carminatives, purgatives, astringents, cholagogues, anthelmintics, diuretics, diaphoretics, emmenagogues, oxytocics, galactagogues, haemostatics, emollients, disinfectants, antidotes, and so forth. In brief, while scientific medicine was still in its infancy, empiric therapeutics were highly advanced.

In the Ebers Papyrus we meet with some striking clinical descriptions of disease which, although not comparable with a modern study of a symptom-complex, yet deal with definite entities which are clearly differentiated from other disorders; they must therefore in those primitive days have supplied a very valuable basis for treatment. The following is a good example in which principles of diagnosis, therapeutics and even prognosis are involved.

'When you are examining a person who is constipated, he will complain of a sense of fullness when he takes nourishment. His abdomen is

distended, his heart beats feebly and he walks like a person suffering from inflammation of the rectum. Make your patient lie down at full length and proceed to examine him. If you find that his skin is hot and the abdomen hard, tell him that his liver is out of order.

You must then prepare a secret vegetable medicine which the physician has prescribed and which will relieve his bowels. As soon as this has happened, if you examine him and find that the right side of the body is hot while the left is cool, say to him "You will recover from this attack; the disorder is wearing itself out."

If, when you next visit your patient, you find that his whole body is cooler, say to him "Your liver is acting again and is now cleansed; the medicine has done its work."'[1]

Some other disorders are just as clearly described, although as a general rule the writer of the Papyrus merely gives a name to an ailment or mentions its chief symptoms. These various clinical pictures of disease (as in the example described above) were evidently based on a careful grouping of symptoms and this would only be possible after close observation. They also permitted an exact diagnosis on which rational

[1] *Papyrus Ebers*, 36, 4 ff.; H. Joachim, *Papyros Ebers*, pp. 39–40. This translation, while not altogether satisfactory, gives a fair idea of Egyptian methods. A better translation of the passage will be found in Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, iii (1898), pp. 291 ff.; but modern research can make considerable amendments even to this.

therapeutics could be founded. Many of the prescriptions might almost pass for modern ones, for they comprise a principal ingredient, an adjuvant and often an excipient for disguising any nauseous taste. In some cases colouring agents are added to enhance the effect.

Let us speculate for a moment on the early steps in therapeutics which led the Egyptian physicians by slow stages to formulate the first principles of treatment, which were doubtless based on observation and induction. For example, the close observation of a series of dyspeptic patients would show that those who abstained from eating recovered rapidly, while others who continued to eat and drink as usual prolonged their dyspepsia.[1]

Again, the observation of a group of cardiopaths would indicate that leisured and wealthy patients who could afford to live at their ease remained comparatively well much longer than did the poor miserable fellahin who had to earn his daily pittance at the sweat of his brow. Thus the clinical course of events in groups of victims suffering from similar disorders would by degrees associate the recovery of some patients and the prolonged illness or death of others with definite lines of treatment. As a result would emerge the

[1] Cf. Celsus's account of the origin of rational medicine. *De Medicina*, Bk. I (Preface).

gentle art of prescribing useful and forbidding hurtful remedies. In more obscure maladies the search for remedies by the method known as 'trial and error' would in course of time bear fruit. There is no doubt, however, that many of the drugs, even when wholesome and rational, and many of the manipulations employed originally found their way into medical practice for purely magical reasons.

B. Magic

No sketch of Egyptian medicine can be complete without reference to the prevailing faith in magic. Medicine in fact originated in magical arts intended to expel the evil spirit that was supposed to have caused the disease. Magic was therefore the mother of medicine and never ceased to influence the latter. Any eulogy of Egyptian therapeutics is heavily discounted when the ever-present accompaniment of magical formulae, amulets and incantations is taken into consideration. Disease was generally attributed, not to a disturbance of normal functions, but to a malign spirit or god who had entered the body and attacked it furiously. Unless this evil spirit could be expelled before irreparable damage had been done, recovery was hopeless. The evil spirits or demons insinuated themselves into the individual by the nostrils, mouth or ears, or else injected into the patient some evil emanation,

and once inside devoured his vital substance. The character and termination of the resulting disease depended on the progress made in the destructive activity of the invading spirit, its virulence being also affected by the times and seasons of the year, by lucky and unlucky days and similar contingencies. He who treats the sick person must first of all discover the nature and, if possible, the name of the evil spirit in possession and then seek to expel it by every means in his power. He must be expert in magic, knowing suitable incantations and skilful in making amulets adapted to the occasion. As opportunity presents he must resort to prayers to the deities and to impressive ritual. Material remedies must also be tried, and recourse had to the rich pharmacopoeia which the experience of centuries had accumulated. The best practitioners were in some measure rationalistic, and carefully diagnosed between those cases for which magic and exorcisms were most suited, those for which incubation in the temple promised the best results, and those which called for incantations accompanied by drugs.

The practice of Egyptian magic was largely based on the belief that incidents in the history of the deities which had brought good fortune to such deities might under suitable conditions and through the intervention of a magician be

reproduced for the benefit of men. Thus the magician called in to treat some disease or alleviate some trouble would first of all select from his knowledge of the history of the gods some incident more or less allied to the disease or trouble with which he was dealing and in which some magical spell had been useful. He would next imagine that he himself represented the god and repeat the same spell that the god had uttered, in the assurance that the same formula would again prove effective. A concrete example may make the process clearer. In the Ebers Papyrus we read that when a magician wished to heal a wound caused by a burn, he would first of all apply his physical remedy, i.e. some of the milk of a woman who had borne a male child, and then pronounce over the remedy the following formula spoken by Isis in one of the legends of that goddess : 'Thy son Horus has been burnt in the desert.' 'Is water there?' 'There is no water there.' 'There is water in my mouth and a Nile between my legs ; I am come to quench the fire.' As this cry of Isis to her son Horus had been successful in quenching the fire, the magician used the same formula, feeling persuaded that it would again, if pronounced by himself, cool and heal the burn.[1]

[1] Cf. A. H. Gardiner, 'Magic (Egyptian)', *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, viii, p. 265. The formula becomes clearer

There is some evidence that the three functions of physician, priest and magician were not always combined in one person. Apparently there were physicians, exorcizers and magicians, each of whom adopted different methods. Thus in the Ebers Papyrus [1] a distinction is drawn between 'every physician, every priest of Sekhmet and every charmman' (*s'awy*). The first has obvious functions; the second was a professional magician (reciter of spells), and the third a maker or user of amulets and charms.[2]

Incantations in medico-magical practice constituted the 'oral rite', which was sometimes supplemented by the 'manual rite' in which various charms and amulets were used, their efficacy being indefinitely magnified when magical formulae had been pronounced over them.[3]

Magicians were especially fond of using wax figures of gods to which supernatural powers had

if it is borne in mind that a messenger reports the fire to Isis who responds.

[1] *Ebers Papyrus*, 99, 2–3.

[2] A. H. Gardiner, 'Professional Magicians in Ancient Egypt', *Proc. S. of Biblical Archaeology*, 1917, pp. 31 ff. Cf. also Maspero, *Proc. S. of Biblical Archaeology*, xiii, pp. 502 ff. = *Études de Mythologie*, iii, pp. 302 ff.

Flinders Petrie enumerates several titles of physicians with different functions. Cf. *Ancient Egypt*, 1924, p. 121.

[3] A. H. Gardiner, 'Magic (Egyptian)', *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, viii, pp. 264 ff.

been imparted by means of symbolic ceremonies and the recital of certain formulae. Such figures doubtless helped to impress sick persons and strengthen the power of suggestion in the hands of the magician.

Another common magical practice was to write down an incantation on papyrus, to wash it off into the medicine and then to administer the latter to the patient, as is still commonly done in Eastern countries.[1] Instead of such a simple phrase as 'Prescription for curing such a disease' the expression 'Prescription for expelling or terrifying such a disease' would be adopted, with the evident implication of demoniacal possession.

This view of the nature of disease naturally had a fundamental and blighting influence on therapeutics. Disease caused by the pernicious influence of an indwelling spirit must be combated by magic, incantations and spells, although remedies might also relieve symptoms and abolish pain. Rational therapeutics and magic were thus closely interwoven in the practice of the magician-physician, who had to distinguish between diseases curable by drugs and those requiring psychotherapy. In the early days superstitious and sacerdotal measures probably predominated, while as time passed on exact observation and thera-

[1] W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 199.

peutics more and more gained the upper hand, sorcery yielding to science. The choice between theurgical or rational methods of treatment would also largely depend on the philosophical views of the physician, and we have evidence that much less magic was used in some cases than in others. The *malade imaginaire* was doubtless as common a phenomenon as he or she is to-day; many faith cures took place at famous shrines such as those of Imhotep.

It may seem strange that such an apparently absurd occult force as magic retained a potent influence through all the centuries of ancient Egyptian history. On the other hand, it must be remembered that sick persons, even if they belong to the educated class, have at all times some excuse for fantastic actions and beliefs. They are abnormally emotional and suggestible, and readily clutch at any remedy, even if irrational, that presents itself, especially if powerfully supported by tradition and authority. As is well known, the benefit derived from medicaments depends largely on the confidence felt in the physician and in his prescriptions.

We cannot doubt that Imhotep, with his wide outlook on life, his experience of men and human affairs, and his interest in astronomy and other sciences, inclined to the side of scientific medicine.

Indeed in later times Imhotep was considered to be the first inventor of the art of healing.[1] Speaking generally, however, faith in magic survived in full force until the second or third centuries A. D. The famous ' Demotic Papyrus of London and Leiden ' dispenses entirely with rational therapeutics and adopts only magical procedure for the cure of disease.

C. Hygiene

The advanced state of hygiene is associated with the high development of the *ars medendi*. The Egyptians boasted that they were the healthiest of all mortals, and carefully regulated the sanitation of the town, of the dwelling and even of the person. The homes of the people were fumigated from time to time in order to keep them sweet, suitable precautions being taken to prevent the annoyance of wasps and mosquitoes. There was also some knowledge of antiseptics, since the virtues of extreme dryness and of certain chemicals like nitre, common salt and alcohol as preservatives were recognized ; even the treatment of the dead body was based on hygienic principles. Evidently the importance of sanitation was well understood. Even in those far-off days experience had taught the lesson that *ὑγιαίνειν ἄριστόν ἐστιν*.

[1] W. Scott, *Hermetica*, i, pp. 358–9 ; iii, pp. 221, 223–4.

A remarkable regimen was imposed on the priests, based on the idea that nothing that was impure should enter into the temple, especially into the 'Holy of Holies', the true dwelling-place of the deity. The physical and moral purity of the officiant was essential to the validity of divine worship. Accordingly, spotless linen was considered the only raiment fit for the priest, owing to its comparative freedom from parasitic contamination.[1] With the same object in view the whole body was shaved every third day, and only shoes of papyrus might be worn. Further, in order to preserve their purity of body every priest washed himself from head to foot in cold water twice every day and twice every night. Lastly, hands and fingers were washed before religious ceremonies, wash-places being installed in the temples for the purpose.[2] What an object lesson such insistence on immaculate cleanliness must have provided for the whole nation!

The value of preventive medicine was also well recognized. The Egyptians probably knew that many diseases proceed from excess of food and from indigestion, and these evils they avoided or

[1] Herodotus, ii. 37.

[2] A. M. Blackman gives many other details relating to purification. Cf. 'Purification (Egyptian)', *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, x, pp. 476 ff.

combated by frequent days of abstinence, by emetics, gentle aperients, and other means of relieving the system. The superiority of prophylaxis as compared with therapeutics was evidently appreciated. ' The whole manner of life ', says Diodorus, ' was so evenly ordered that it would appear as though it had been arranged according to the rules of health by a learned physician, rather than by a law-giver.' [1]

As regards puericulture there is some difference of opinion. While Wiedemann [2] thinks that the infantile mortality was high owing to defective maternal care, Hagemann finds evidence of careful breast-feeding and suitable nurture both of the infants and of older children.[3]

These few facts will suffice to indicate in outline the extraordinary developments in medicine and hygiene that had taken place on the banks of the Nile. But it cannot be claimed that Egyptian medicine ever developed into a scientific system. Rather should its stage be described as one in which superstition and science were never clearly distinguished, and in which they mutually impeded one another through their age-long association.

The conception of disease as due to a perverted

[1] Diodorus Siculus, i, c. lxx.

[2] Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten*, pp. 74, 416.

[3] *Janus*, ix (1904), p. 224.

physiology and not as an entity inside the body never entered the brain of the most philosophical Egyptian physicians. They never realized that disease and death were natural and inevitable, but usually attributed them to malign spirits or deities. They never recognized the place of man in relation to his environment, human and physical, but clung to their ancient worn-out superstitions ; in other words they never discovered the immutable reign of law. Hence it was that physic failed to emancipate itself from the curse of sterility and stagnation, as must always happen when divorced from an exact knowledge of anatomy, physiology and pathology. Pharaonic medicine in brief remained throughout in a state of arrested development in which superstition and science struggled for mastery. Which of us can say that this perennial conflict has, even to-day, been finally won by either combatant ?

CHAPTER VI

THE TUTELARY DEITY OF MEDICINE

IMHOTEP, the vizier of Pharaoh Zoser and afterwards the Egyptian god of medicine, possesses high claims to be regarded by the civilized world as the tutelary divinity of the healing art, such claims being justified firstly by the eminence of the man as shown by the services rendered to his king and country, and secondly by his reputation as a physician-magician which endured through many centuries and eventually culminated in his apotheosis. To these grounds may be added the weighty one of an unquestioned priority as the earliest physician of whom it is possible to draw up a detailed biography. The subject may be briefly discussed under two headings :

A. The Claims of Imhotep as Patron Deity of Medicine.

B. The Place of Imhotep in the Annals of Medicine.

A. The Claims of Imhotep as Patron Deity of Medicine

For many centuries Asklepios or Aesculapius has been accepted by the civilized world as the emblematic god of medicine and it is interesting

to inquire how he attained to this dignity. Homer speaks of Asklepios as 'the blameless physician' ἰατρός ἀμύμων, the father of two heroes Makhaon and Podaleirios who were physicians in the Greek camp at the siege of Troy. Many ancient authorities, however, give him a mythical origin and describe him as the son of Apollo and the nymph Coronis, who was educated by the centaur Cheiron and taught by him the art of healing disease. Yet other authorities assert that Asklepios never was a man of flesh and blood, but that he was merely the personification of certain ideas.[1] Most modern scholars believe that Asklepios was originally a god and that his humanity was merely a mythological by-product.[2] However this may be, we know that in the course of time remarkable recoveries from disease became crystallized round a real or fictitious personality who was afterwards raised to the dignity of deity by the gratitude of mankind.[3]

[1] W. Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, i, p. 44. According to another tradition Asklepios was originally a serpent that subsequently became transformed into an anthropomorphic god.

[2] L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 1921, p. 235.

[3] It is interesting to note that Asklepios was at times regarded as a demigod, before reaching full apotheosis. Further legendary details about him are given by M. Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, i, p. 93. Cf. also L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, 1921, pp. 234 ff.

Numerous temples were erected in his honour in various parts of Greece and elsewhere, the oldest one being at Trikka in Thessaly, while the principal ones were at Epidauros, Cos and Pergamos. Many of the temples were situated near to springs or on hill-tops, and in them incubation was practised, in the course of which Asklepios was said to appear in dreams to the suppliants at his shrines, and either to cure them directly or to prescribe remedies which resulted in recovery. When cured, patients were in the habit of offering some sacrifice, usually a cock, and hung up votive tablets in the temple recording their names, their maladies and the means that had led to their recovery.

The cult of Asklepios appears not to go back further than the time of Homer who is believed to have lived somewhere about the year 850 B. C. It was introduced into Athens by Sophocles in 420 B. C. and gradually spread all over Greece and the neighbouring countries. By the time of Alexander the Great it had become so popular that between three and four hundred temples were dedicated to Asklepios. The treatment carried out at his shrines embraced purification, inunction, fumigation, dietetic restrictions, prayers and sacrifices, including a ritual [1] whose suggestive

[1] R. Caton, *The Temples and Ritual of Asklepios*, 1900, p. 31.

symbolism stimulated the imagination and awakened an expectation of cure.

His worship was introduced into Rome at the time of the great plague early in the third century B.C., a special temple being erected on an island in the Tiber. From that period onwards the fame of Asklepios gradually extended all over the civilized world as the emblematic god of medicine, the reputed healer and consoler of men. His figure appears in countless statues,[1] charters, diplomas, coins and seals associated with hospitals, medical schools and societies scattered throughout the world.

On the other hand the pages of this volume have supplied evidence that two thousand years before Homer, many centuries before the recognition of Asklepios as the Greek legendary god of medicine, there lived in Egypt (*ca.* 2980 B. C.) a magician-physician so famous for his skill in healing disease that he was raised to the rank of medical demigod and recognized eventually as the Egyptian god of medicine. To him surely belongs the highest place in our hagiology ; to him should physicians all

[1] The superb statues of Asklepios, with his staff entwined by the sacred serpent, at Athens, Naples and elsewhere, no doubt helped to enhance his reputation. Sometimes the god is attended by a youth named Telesphoros, the god of recovery, as in the statue in the Louvre.

the world over look up as the patron genius of the *ars medendi*, as the emblematic god of medicine. His name should be inscribed in the calendar of medical saints ; his portrait should form the badge of our profession.

The reason for the neglect of Imhotep doubtless lies in the fact that Western civilization has been reared on the literature of Greece and Rome. Not until Young and Champollion deciphered the hieroglyphs about a century ago was the history of ancient Egypt revealed to the learned world. Until then all contemporary records, whether depicted in temples or tombs or inscribed on papyri, were undecipherable. Further, remarkable discoveries in Assyria, Crete and Mycenae have thrown a flood of light on early civilizations whose very existence was unknown only a few generations ago. Meanwhile Greek and Roman scholarship, as interpreted before the recent discoveries, had for many centuries been familiar with the Greek story of Asklepios, with the result that the mythological lore relating to that classical deity of the healing art has become interwoven with the history of medicine in modern literature to the exclusion of the much older Egyptian deity. Now that Imhotep has emerged from the mists of antiquity and that his biography has been elucidated, the time has surely come when justice

should be done to this venerable figure and when he should be granted the place of honour which Asklepios usurped many centuries ago.[1]

Apart from the historical claims of Imhotep to replace Asklepios, there may be urged the desirability of having as our figure-head a man of flesh and blood, a distinguished and many-sided personality, instead of one of such obscure birth that a mythical parentage has been attributed to him. Moreover, very little is known of the life and work of Asklepios, whereas of Imhotep remains at least one striking architectural achievement as well as numerous epigraphical and papyric inscriptions, statuettes and mural representations, all pointing to a distinguished and well-spent life devoted in part to public service and in part to the healing of the sick.[2] In adopting Imhotep, in brief, the medical profession would find a worthy representative, and erect on a pedestal of honour a notable

[1] The Reading Pathological Society, the oldest Pathological Society in the United Kingdom, has recently adopted Imhotep, the Egyptian deity of medicine, as its Badge. This Badge displays the figure of Imhotep, and was presented to the Society by Sir Stewart Abram, as a souvenir of his Presidency. This is probably the first recognition by a Medical Society of the claims of Imhotep to be recognized as the patron spirit of the healing art.

[2] Cf. also an article, ' The Claims of Imhotep ', by J. B. H., *British Medical Journal* of 31 March, 1928, p. 565.

Egyptian physician who for centuries before the Christian era had been looked up to and worshipped as the deity of medicine. On all these grounds Imhotep deserves to be enthroned as the tutelary deity of the healing art. He, rather than his semi-mythical rival, deserves to be entitled *ὁ πάτριος θεὸς ἡμῶν*, ' our ancestral god '.[1]

B. The Place of Imhotep in the Annals of Medicine

It is extraordinary that so little attention is devoted to Imhotep in the various works dealing with the history of medicine, even the most recent. As a rule but meagre justice is meted out to one whom the medical profession should delight to honour. Some extracts from modern historians of the healing art arranged chronologically will supply evidence. Even when Imhotep is mentioned there is the only briefest allusion to his human personality or to the demigod stage of his history.

The earliest reference appears to be that of Haeser, who speaks of ' the temple of Imhotep, the son of Ptah, and the Egyptian Aesculapius'.[2]

[1] This title is applied by Galen to Asklepios. *Opera Omnia*, ed. by Kühn, vi, p. 41.

[2] H. Haeser, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Medicin*, 3rd ed., 1875, i, p. 52.

Withington makes the following reference to Imhotep when he says :

'At a still later period we find a special god of medicine, Imhotep, son of Ptah and Sekhet, in whose temple at Memphis incubation was practised.' [1]

Neuburger merely refers to 'the son of Ptah, Imhotep (Asklepios, possibly a deified priestly physician), whose principal sanctuary was in Memphis. . . . The importance of Imhotep ("he that comes in peace") grew with the rise of Memphis and its school of priests.' [2]

J. L. Pagel goes into somewhat more detail :

'In the days of King Doser (Tosorthros) of the IIIrd Dynasty lived a physician called Imhutep who became a kind of Asklepios, a deified man or demigod, who was afterwards worshipped in Memphis as a god of healing. Between 700 B. C. and the advent of Alexander the Great this Imhutep was held in high honour, even more so than the god of medicine Sarapis who became so famous in the days of Alexander.' [3]

[1] E. T. Withington, *Medical History from the Earliest Times*, 1894, p. 24. As a frontispiece to his volume Withington gives a portrait of Sekhet'en'onkh (*ca.* 2743 B. C.), the chief physician of Pharaoh Sahurē of the Vth Dynasty, and described as the earliest known physician. In view of our recent knowledge of Imhotep, that epithet is no longer applicable to Sekhet'en'onkh.

[2] M. Neuburger, *History of Medicine*, 1910, i, pp. 21–2.

[3] J. L. Pagel, *Einführung in die Geschichte der Medizin*, 2nd ed. revised by K. Sudhoff, 1915, p. 29.

Osler deals much more adequately with Imhotep :

'Imhotep is the first figure of a physician to stand out clearly from the mists of antiquity[1]. . . . He became a popular god, not only healing men when alive, but taking good care of them in the journeys after death. The facts about this *medicinae primus inventor*, as he has been called, may be gathered from Kurt Sethe's study. He seems to have corresponded very much with the Greek Asklepios. As a god he is met with comparatively late, between 700 and 332 B. C. Numerous bronze figures of him remain. The oldest memorial mentioning him is a statue of one of his priests Amasis at Berlin. Ptolemy V dedicated to him a temple on the island of Philae. His cult increased much in later days, and a special temple was dedicated to him near Memphis. Sethe suggests that the cult of Imhotep gave the inspiration to the Hermetic literature. The association of Imhotep with the famous temple at Edfu is of special interest.'[2]

K. Sudhoff, who edited the second edition of Pagel, in his own short *Handbuch* merely repeats the details about Imhotep already quoted from that author.[3]

[1] Here is interspersed a quotation from J. H. Breasted, *A History of the Ancient Egyptians*, 1908, p. 104.

[2] Sir William Osler, *The Evolution of Modern Medicine*, 1921, p. 10.

[3] K. Sudhoff, *Kurzes Handbuch der Geschichte der Medizin*, 1922, p. 20.

Meyer-Steineg and Sudhoff give no description of Imhotep, although they reproduce a statuette of him as a demigod.[1]

Power and Thompson give a much fuller account of Imhotep:

'I-em-Hetep. "He who cometh in peace." "Good Physician of gods and men." Was regarded as the son of Ptah and the chief deity of medicine. His first temple was established in Memphis, which later became a centre for healing. At a later period temples were dedicated to him at Edfu and various parts of Upper Egypt. It is probable that he was a real personage who lived in the IIIrd Dynasty, and was a priest of Ra, the Sun-god, who for his great skill in healing was raised to the position of demigod. He is said to have visited the suffering to give them "peaceful sleep and heal their pains and diseases". According to various records he is "the beneficent god who listens to the prayers of the people, and by his protection gives life to all human beings in all places"; "the god who protects human beings, who gives to him who calls upon him, who gives life to men and women and who gives life to all who are bounden to him". He is also called the "god who looks after the sick", and "the worshipful or holy god who gives a son to him who has none".'[2]

[1] Th. Meyer-Steineg and K. Sudhoff, *Geschichte der Medizin im Überblick*, 1922, p. 21.

[2] Sir D'Arcy Power and C. J. S Thompson, *Chronologia Medica*, 1923, p. 4.

F. H. Garrison contents himself with a meagre description :

' I-em-hetep (" He who cometh in peace ") was a medical demigod, the Aesculapius of the Egyptians, of the IIIrd Dynasty (4500 B. C.), who was afterwards worshipped at Memphis and had a temple erected in his honour upon the Island of Philae. He was the earliest known physician. A papyric fragment of the second century A. D., recently published by the Egyptian Exploration Fund, shows that he was worshipped even in the time of Mycerinus.' [1]

W. A. Jayne makes much fuller references to Imhotep, and indeed is the first medical historian who deals adequately with this medical deity. We must refer our readers to his interesting summary.[2]

C. J. Cumston, a recent writer on the subject, only makes brief allusions to Imhotep, who is described as the true Egyptian god of healing, and as ' the equivalent of the Greek Asklepius or Aesculapius '.[3] The same comment applies to the fine volume which A. Castiglione has just published.[4]

These extracts will suffice to prove the inadequate attention that as a general rule has been

[1] F. H. Garrison, *History of Medicine*, 1924, p. 48.

[2] W. A. Jayne, *The Healing Gods of Ancient Civilizations*, 1925, pp. 32, 33, 62–4.

[3] C. J. Cumston, *Introduction to the History of Medicine*, 1926, pp. 35, 36, 42.

[4] A. Castiglione, *Storia della Medicina*, 1927, p. 52.

paid to that immortal Egyptian magician-physician Imhotep. It may doubtless be pleaded in extenuation that it is only during recent years that the contemporaneity of Imhotep with the Pharaoh Zoser has been established on a sound historical basis. Moreover, as regards the demigod stage the evidence has been greatly strengthened by Grenfell and Hunt's discovery of the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus described above. Future histories of medicine will doubtless place Imhotep in the limelight and raise him on the pedestal of honour to which he is justly entitled.[1]

We may truthfully apply to him the words of Virgil :

> ' Semper honos nomenque tuum laudesque manebunt.'

[1] Two recent works, although they are not, strictly speaking, histories of medicine as a whole, make references to Imhotep. But they do not materially add to our knowledge of the subject or deal with the latest discoveries. (1) D. McKenzie, *The Infancy of Medicine*, 1927, pp. 22, 38 ; (2) E. Holländer, *Äsculap und Venus*, 1928, pp. 234, 237, 249.

THE EPILOGUE

WE have now completed the story of the venerable physician, whom Osler calls 'Dr.' Imhotep, from the time of his dramatic appearance as vizier and magician-physician of King Zoser to his elevation to the rank of full Egyptian deity. The attempt has been made to arrange the historical references that have survived in chronological order, to group them into a narrative and to present a panorama of Imhotep's activities with such completeness as our available information permits. The contemplation of a life so varied in its pursuits, so notable in its achievements, so trusted by suffering humanity, so glorified in its final apotheosis, should fill us with admiration. His record reaches from the Pyramid age through the Middle and New Kingdoms and far into the period of Egyptian servitude, almost indeed until the subjugation of the country by the Arabs in A. D. 640. He has bequeathed the memory of a well-spent life devoted to the public weal.

History tells us nothing of the steps by which Imhotep gradually climbed from some humble post at the royal court up to the responsible office of prime minister and court physician. Without drawing too much on our imagination we may assume that a commanding personality, a high

character and a tender sympathetic heart, by their cumulative action, placed him on the lofty pedestal which he reached. Indeed it would be difficult to find a historical parallel for a similar concatenation of incidents occurring during an earthly career and during a period of posthumous celebrity.

The worship of Imhotep extended far into the Roman period, certainly as late as the sixth century of our era, so that his record covers a period of three thousand years and helps us to survey a long perspective of history. His name deserves to be held in everlasting remembrance as one of the few men of genius recorded in the annals of ancient Egypt ; he shines as one of the fixed stars in the Egyptian firmament. His influence still remained dominant when Egyptian civilization had long passed its zenith and when the country had become the vassal first of Greece and eventually of Rome. Even at that late period the *graffiti* of the rich Greeks and Romans who visited the ruined temples and tombs of Egypt still record the homage paid to the ' beneficent god ' and the widespread faith in his power to heal the sick devotees who flocked to his shrines.

During the later periods of Egyptian history, Imhotep, *alias* Imouthes, became more and more closely identified with Asklepios or Aesculapius, the Greek and afterwards the Roman god of

medicine. Ultimately indeed Imhotep was entirely merged in the latter deity.

In Egypt, as everywhere else, 'the old order changeth, giving place to new'. During the course of the intervening centuries Time's eroding finger and the vandalism of man have wrought strange transformations in the temples where the beloved Imhotep formerly reigned as the deity who gave life and health to the sick and suffering. His chief temple at Memphis is now a scene of desolation. Where once the sacred aisles and pillars echoed to the tramp of priest and worshipper, all is silence, save for bats and owls and scarabs. The impressive ritual, the magic rites and incantations, the invocations to the ministering deity have ceased for ever.

No longer do the seekers after health crave permission to sleep within the precincts of his temple in the faith that 'the god who listens to those who call for him' would appear to them in a dream and reveal the panacea for their sickness. No longer do devoted patients whose burden has been rolled away sing and dance before his shrine with hearts bursting with gratitude for a new lease of health and life. All the glory has vanished from the ancient Asklepieion at Memphis which at one time throbbed with eager devotees all bringing their toll of sorrow and suffering from which they

hoped the beloved deity of healing would give them release.

The smaller sanctuary of Imhotep at Philae is now submerged in a vast reservoir destined to bring material blessings to the country in lieu of the healing virtues formerly associated with his temple.

Let us, however, be thankful that even to this day there survive many material and visible memorials of the immortal Egyptian physician who has made posterity his eternal debtor. The terraced pyramid of Sakkarah, one of the oldest of Egyptian monuments, the ruins at Philae, at Deir el-Bahari and elsewhere will long remain as imposing reliquiae recalling the part he played on the stage of history ; and even when pyramid and temple have crumbled into dust his name will still be held in undying remembrance. Deep are the footprints he has left on the sands of time, and physicians all over the world will ever revere him as one of the pioneers of their ancient profession, as one whose name ' on fame's eternall bead-roll is worthie to be fyled '. *Medice immortalis, in perpetuum ave !*

APPENDIXES

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B. THE NAME 'IMHOTEP' AND ITS MODERN VARIANTS[1]

The name Imhotep, written in hieroglyphs, may be spelt , , or more briefly , and may be transliterated *Iy-m-ḥtp*. The first sign is a graphic compound of and , and is the verb 'to come', the *scriptio plena* being , as in the second example above. The second part of the word, *m*, is 'in'. From the time of the New Kingdom the sign (derived from an Old Kingdom word, , *im*) is often used as the equivalent of . The final group (usually written), *ḥtp*, is 'peace'. In the Graeco-Roman period the jackal , sometimes has the value of ; thus the name of Imhotep is written in a Ptolemaic inscription at Deir el-Bahari . The usually adopted modern vocalization of the name is Imhotep, which the Greeks rendered as *Ἰμούθης* or Imouthes.

Personal names ending in the word *ḥtp* and compounded with the names of certain, but not of all, gods,

[1] I am indebted to Mr. W. R. Dawson for these notes on the name Imhotep.

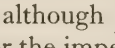
were common in Egypt in all periods. Thus we find Rē-ḥotep, Ptah-ḥotep, and similar compounds with the divine names Amen, Aah, Khons, Khnum, Mut, Min, Mont (Menthu), and others.[1] In these names the word ḥtp is the ' pseudo-participle ' or ' old perfective ' tense of the verb *ḥtp* ; the names therefore mean ' Re is content ', ' Ptah is content ', &c., and they are more correctly rendered—*Re-ḥotpe* or *Re-ḥotp*, &c. The verb *ḥtp* means ' to be content ', and its use as a noun conveys the notion ' that which makes content '. Its commonest use as a noun is with the meaning ' offerings ', as these, *par excellence*, in a primitive concept, are what bring contentment to a god. Its almost equally common significance ' peace ' is derived from the same series of ideas and refers to the state of the god's mind when due offerings have been made to him.

The name Imhotep, however, is quite differently constituted from the above god + *ḥtp* compounds. In this case ḥtp is a noun and means ' peace ' or ' satisfaction '. The translation ' he who comes in peace ' is the generally accepted one, although may be either the participle ' He who comes ' or the imperative ' Come '. The name therefore means either ' one who comes in peace ' or ' a comer in peace '.[2]

Variants in the Spelling of Imhotep

The Egyptian hieroglyphs, like most of the Semitic scripts, do not indicate vowels, nor indeed do they always accurately represent the consonantal skeleton. For these reasons there is no certainty how words were actually

[1] Certain divine names are never found combined in this way, e. g. Osiris, Isis, Nephthys.

[2] Names beginning with are not uncommon in the Old and Middle Kingdoms, e. g.  I-MERY ' come, beloved ', I·M·SNB ' come in health '.

sounded, and a multiform transliteration, largely based on conjecture, has resulted. The following list of variants, which does not profess to be complete, will suffice to indicate the existing confusion and the urgency of some international agreement on the subject.[1] Such a final settlement was proposed at the London Congress of Orientalists in 1874, but has not yet been achieved.

Aiemapt	S. Birch, *Egypt from the Earliest Times to 300 B.C.*, p. 29.
Aiemhetp	Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, 1878, iii, p. 204.
Ai-em-ḥetep	Budge, *An Egyptian Hieroglyphic Dictionary*, p. 30.
Aiemhotep	Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, 1878, iii, p. 204.
Äimhetep	Petrie, *A History of Egypt*, i, p. 30.
Eimhátpou	Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, 1916, viii, p. 124.
Ēm hō'tep	Breasted, *Ancient Times*, 1914, p. 737.
I-emhep.t	Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in History*, 1848, i, p. 400.
I-em-ḥetep	Budge, *Gods of the Ancient Egyptians*, i, p. 522.
I-em-hotep	Caton, *Harveian Oration*, 1904, p. 5.
Iemhotpe	Weigall, *History of the Pharaohs*, i, p. 6.
Iḫotep	Pauly, *Real-Encyclopädie*, ix, p. 1214.
Imhátpou	Maspero, *Études*, &c., viii, p. 124.

[1] Variants in which only small differences occur, such as the use of either the simple ' h ' or the guttural ' ḥ ', have not been included. Sethe discusses in detail the question of vocalization and accepts ' Imhotep ' as a satisfactory representation (Sethe, *Imhotep*, p. 1).

In the *Catalogue of the Demotic Papyri in the John Rylands Library*, iii, p. 437, F. Ll. Griffith gives the ways in which ' Imhotep ' was written in the time of Psammêtik I, Ahmasi II, Darius, and the early and late Ptolemies.

Imhep.t	Bunsen, *Egypt's Place in History*, 1848, i, p. 400.
Im-ḥetep	Wiedemann, *Ägyptische Geschichte*, 1880, p. 220.
Imhoten	Wall, *Sex and Sex Worship*, p. 406.
Imhotep	*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., xxiv, p. 681.
Imhothès	*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xlviii, p. 362.
Imhotp	*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., xiii, p. 245.
Imhotpe	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, xii, p. 780.
Imhotpou	Maspero, *Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria*, p. 120.
Imhotpû	Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization*, p. 105.
Imhoutpé	Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, 1916, viii, p. 124.
Imhutep	Sethe, *Die Aegyptologie*, p. 7. (*Der Alte Orient*, 1923, xxiii.)
Imopth	*Records of the Past*, iv, p. 117.
Imothès	*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xlviii, p. 367.
Imouthph	J. F. Champollion, *Notice Descriptive des Monuments*, 1844, ii, p. 277.
Imutep	Sethe, *Imhotep*, p. 12.
Iu-em-hept	A. B. Gosse, *Civilization of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 112.
J-em-hetep	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, xiv (1918), p. 39.
Yemhatpe	H. R. Hall, *The Observer*, Jan. 24, 1926.
Ŷmhetep	Lady Amherst, *A Sketch of Egyptian History*, p. 68.
Ymḥôtep	A. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 1894, p. 386.
Ymhothphe	H. R. Hall, *The Observer*, Jan. 24, 1926.

C. THE PEDIGREE OF IMHOTEP

In the Wadi Hammamat, the valley which runs down from Coptos to the Red Sea, the architect Khnum-ib-re (Chnem-eb-re), who between the years 495–491 B. C.[1] was occupied in quarrying stones for the Public Works Department, has left us an inscription which records the names of his ancestors, and in which Kanofer the father of Imhotep appears first and Imhotep holds the second place. The pedigree contains a list of twenty-five architects, all of whom are consecutively fathers and sons. Moreover, they are all master-builders.[2]

In this pedigree, which dates from the Persian period and probably extends over *ca.* 800 years, the earliest known ancestor is described as ' the chief of works, both of the South- and of the North-land, governor of the capital and vizier, chief ritual priest of Zoser, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, the son of Kanofer, chief of works of the South- and of the North-land '.

This master-builder, or chief of all the King's works, who was also chief ritual priest of King Zoser, must almost certainly have been Imhotep. The office of Master of the King's Works was evidently held in high honour, as was indeed the building industry in Egypt.

The following pedigree is reproduced from the list as given by Brugsch.[3]

[1] i.e. from the 26th to the 30th year of the reign of Darius.

[2] Breasted uses the following expressions to indicate this office : ' master-builder ', ' chief of works ', ' leader of works ', ' master of works ', ' overseer of works '. Cf. *Ancient Records of Egypt*, v, Index V.

[3] H. Brugsch-Bey, *A History of Egypt under the Pharaohs*, 1879, ii, p. 299. In this list, in order to avoid confusion, Brugsch's spelling of the personal names is retained, even when it is inconsistent with that employed elsewhere in this volume.

THE PEDIGREE OF THE ARCHITECTS

KA NOFER : Architect of S. and N. Egypt.

IMHOTEP : Architect of S. and N. Egypt; chief burgomaster, a high functionary of King Z'a-sar (lived in the time of the IIIrd Dynasty).

R'A-HOTEP : Prophet of Amon-ra, king of the gods; secret-seer of Heliopolis; architect of Upper and Lower Egypt; chief burgomaster.

BOK-EN-KHUNSU : Chief burgomaster.

UZA-KHUNSU : Architect; chief burgomaster.

NOFER-MENNU : Architect; chief burgomaster.

MI (or AI ?) : Architect; chief burgomaster.

SI-UER-NENEN-HIB : Architect.

PEPI : Architect; chief burgomaster.

AMON-HIR-PI-MESH'A : 2nd, 3rd and 4th prophet and high-priest of Amon, king of the gods; chief burgomaster.

HOR-EM-SAF : Chief burgomaster.

MERMER : Architect; commander.

HOR-EM-SAF : Architect; commander.

ZA-HIB : Architect : commander.

NASSHUNU : Architect ; commander.

ZA-HIB : Architect ; commander.

NASSHUNU : Architect ; commander.

ZA-HIB : Architect ; commander.

NASSHUNU : Architect ; commander.

ZA-N-HIBU : Architect of Upper and Lower Egypt ; commander.

NASSHUNU : Architect.

UAH-AB-R'A-RAN-UËR : Architect.

'ANKH-PSAMTHIK : Architect of Upper and Lower Egypt.

A'AHMES SI-NIT (*m.* Sit-Nofer-tum) : Architect of Upper and Lower Egypt.

KHNUM-AB-R'A : Chief minister of works for the whole country ; architect of Upper and Lower Egypt in the 27th to 30th years of King Darius I (about 490 B. C.).

The text of the inscription on which the above pedigree was based has been published by Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, iii, Pl. 275a, and more recently by Couyat and Montet, *Les Inscriptions Hiéroglyphiques du Ouâdî Hammâmât*, 1912-13, Pl. xxii, Nos. 92, 93. This work forms volume xxxiv of the *Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*. The title translated ' chief burgomaster ' by Brugsch is (often written more fully), and is now translated ' Governor of the

Town and Vizier'. It is interesting to note that in the Hood Papyrus (Brit. Museum, 10202) the simple title 'vizier' occupies a high position in the hierarchy, for it follows immediately after those of the royal family and hereditary barons (Hood, 1, 12), whilst the double title 'governor of the town and vizier' occupies a more humble position in the list and follows a series of offices in the civil and military services (Hood, 1, 16).

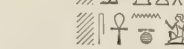
POSTSCRIPT

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE PARENTS OF IMHOTEP

SINCE this book has been put into type, the author has received the following note from Mr. Warren R. Dawson:

'Dr. Alan Gardiner has called my attention to the fact that one of the unplaced fragments (No. 40) of the Canon of Kings at Turin contains the debris of two names which may be those of the parents of Imhotep. Eduard Meyer (*Aegyptische Chronologie*, p. 115) transcribes the fragment thus:

" . . . . Son of Ptah "

 " . . . . . S'onkh,"

and refers in a foot-note to the suggestion, originally made by H. Schäfer, that these broken words may be the names of Imhotep's parents. Meyer rejects this suggestion on the ground that the determinative of the second name is , a man, and not , a woman. Dr. Gardiner, however, on reference to his transcription of the words which he made from

the original papyrus, ascertained that the determinative in question was actually 𓀀, proving that the second name was that of a woman.

'I have referred to Lepsius's facsimile of the papyrus (*Auswahl*, Pl. IV), but this is evidently incorrect, for the hieratic signs there given appear to be . The first sign of the group, transcribed by Meyer and by Gardiner, appears to me to be the hieratic form of the vertical plural 𓏺, which resembles those of 𓀀 and 𓏺. If this suggestion is correct, it removes the only difficulty in reading the second name as that of Imhotep's mother, Khreduonkh. The fragment would then be restored thus:

" Imhotep son of Ptah, born of Khreduonkh."

'In this restoration I have used the orthography of *Papyrus Harris* 500 (Page 6, line 6) for the name of Imhotep.

'If the suggestion is correct that the Turin fragment contains the names of Imhotep's parents, it is of great interest, since it shows that as early as the time of Ramesses II (fourteenth century B.C.), when the Turin Papyrus was written, Imhotep was already called " Son of Ptah".'

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